

METHOD IN ENGLISH
BEING

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE
OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN
INDIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS



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INDIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

BY

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TO

G. S KRISHNAYYA, M. A., Ph. D (Columbia)

Inspector of European Schools, Province of Bombay,
Formerly Vice-principal, Teachers' College, Kolhapur.

BY PROFESSION AN INSPECTOR, BY PREFERENCE A TEACHER,
MY INSPIRED



FOREWORD

India is, alas, a dependent country and as such a study of the language of the rulers is a vital necessity. 'English' thus claims the lion's share in the curriculum. Now it is true that a superficial acquaintance with the language which may do in the case of the German and the Japanese student will not do in the case of the Indian student, he must needs have a much wider vocabulary and a much greater accuracy of form. Yet, it is the mother-tongue that will always reign supreme in the main work of education, the transmission of ideas and ideals; no foreign language can ever be a substitute.

The teaching of 'English' in Indian schools has been defective because there is often a needless emphasis on the 'content' to the neglect of the 'form'. Mr Shahgram's searching analysis makes this position crystal-clear. The study of 'English' is mainly a study of the sentence-unit with its complexities of tense and its intricacies of construction. Many teachers of 'English' do not sufficiently realise this fundamental truth and while many who do have no clear-cut notions about the various sub-divisions of the subject.

Books on the teaching of English written for English students are obviously totally unsuitable to our conditions, so different in cultural heritage and the average age of the pupil. Books by English authors written for Indian teachers are, in general, far too academic and, as regards the practical needs of the teacher, far too inadequate. The unique feature of Mr Shahgram's book is a clear grasp of these needs and an honest effort to cater to them both adequately and extensively.

This book does offer the usual theoretical discussions, does deal with the usual, hoary controversies, but what appeals to me most is its intensely practical nature—detailed guidance to the teacher in his day-to-day work. The teaching of 'form' is an art, it has a technique of its own, after extensive and laborious trials a systematic procedure is evolved, many ingenious devices are suggested even the inevitable 'drill' is made palatable by the introduction of many charming playways—all these are set forth in vivid detail and in a convincing manner.

I warmly congratulate Mr Shahgram on having presented to the teacher world a much needed and valuable work on the all important subject of English teaching.

N G NARALKAR

V. V. V. HIGH SCHOOL, ROOMA,
October, 1941

PREFACE



The following pages represent substantially the notes I had prepared for my personal use and study during my stay at THE TRAINING COLLEGE at KOLHAPUR. Such modifications as they have undergone have been necessitated by their presentation in a 'book form',—elaboration of a point here rearrangement of matter there, and an all-round amplification of material in general. Advantage has also been taken of the opportunity, thus afforded, to revise some of my earlier viewpoints in the light of some six years' experience of teaching English to all forms of an Indian Secondary School—from forms I to VII.

It would appear that the present book stands in need of an apology for its publication as there are scores and scores of excellent publications on the subject, both English and American. This very surfeit of them turns the apology into an excuse. For one thing, these books, the majority of them, are written by foreigners having for their back-ground 'native' conditions, and therefore foreign to us, and for another, most of them deal with some one specialized aspect of the subject. A glance at the Bibliography (by no means exhaustive) appended at the end of the book, will bear out the point. The principles of foreign language teaching, though in essentials the same wherever the problem of bilingualism is involved, demand adaptation to Indian conditions where the teaching of English occupies a specially privileged position, not at all analogous to the teaching of foreign languages (like

French, German, Spanish etc.) in England, France, America and other countries. Even of those writers who have been willing to take the trouble of acquainting themselves with Indian conditions and their specific demands, there are few who have specialized themselves in the teaching of English in *Indian* Secondary Schools, under actual classroom conditions (with twenty-four hours of actual teaching work a week) and can, therefore, speak from personal experience. Secondly, as has already been recorded, the problem of teaching English in India is, to say the least, very complex and presents so many factors, each of a specific nature demanding specific treatment, that it is futile to expect all of them treated with full justice in one single book. The position of English in India, the aim of teaching English to Indians, the history of English teaching in India, the psychology of language learning, the different methods of teaching a foreign language with their attendant 'advantages and disadvantages', the place of phonetics in the teaching of a foreign language, the importance of correct recitation, the treatment of prose, the treatment of poetry, the teaching of grammar, the teaching of composition etc.—each one constitutes a self-contained topic in itself. Anything like a leisurely study of each topic involves a careful study of several books. Specialized books on special topics are available, some of them by writers who are authorities in their fields. To read them all and to extract the relevant information from them is not possible for the teacher (or the *net* candidate) who is hard pressed for time. What he does require is a single book which contains the *synopsis* of relevant authoritative works and wherein each topic has been made as self-contained and full as possible. The present book is an attempt in this direction.

The writer of this book was interested in the subject of English teaching. To the *fostering* of this interest and the formation of proper attitudes in him the help, encouragement

and learned disquisitions of two of his professors, Dr. G. S. KRISHNAIAH, M. A., Ph. D., and Mr. B. M. MURTHALI, B. A., M. T., contributed in no small measure. The fact that his stay at the Training College coincided with their terms as professors there, must be counted as a fortunate circumstance. They not only enlightened him on the scope of the subject and its implications and suggested and often lent books on each of the topics, but also at considerable personal trouble, made suggestions and discussed the way of approach and the direction of study.

The naive interest in the subject, kept up and directed into creative channels by encouragement and masterly direction, led the writer to make a systematic study of each topic. He read sedulously and endeavoured to draw his information from authors best qualified to give it. The mass of material, thus accumulated relating to each topic, was so condensed and reordered as to make its treatment as self-contained as possible under the circumstances. The end of term saw the completion of these notes, of sizeable proportion and very full as it appeared to him then!

Some of my colleagues, and others, too, who happened to go through these notes, harped on the advisability of publishing them, if only to save the M. T. students the trouble and time involved in gathering from various sources (and they are various) the information contained in them. Though the very collecting of this material at first hand is so invaluable education in itself, the M. T. candidate has little time to bestow on this subject which actually forms one-fifteenth of the total syllabus he has to study. Even the lecturers do not find time to deal with all the topics and even those which are taken up are not treated with anything like the full justice due to them. It was, therefore, considered that if a book of this kind could be placed in the hands of candi-

amends by acknowledging my indebtedness to the various authors and publishers collectively by giving at the end of the book as full a bibliography as I could prepare from memory and mentioning the name of the author together with that of the publisher (which I ascertained from the PROPRIETOR of 'THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK SERVICE', POONA, to whom my thanks are due). I hope that my acknowledgement in this general form will be accepted.

This book, thus, is necessarily a work of compilation and eclectic selection. It touches nearly on all the topics and problems that the N.T. candidate and the school teacher needs to be conversant with. Completeness in a moderate compass, with regard to each topic, has been kept in view. At every stage, the principles underlying a particular practice, together with the practice itself, have been treated fully—not only 'what should be done?' and 'how it should be done', but also 'why it should be done so.' Very likely, I might have stressed some points more than others, while some I might have unintentionally neglected. But a book of this moderate size, purporting to deal with all the topics between two covers, cannot find a place for all the details. It will be ungenerous to look for the ample and leisurely character of specialised books and the equipment of a specialist at all points in a work of moderate compass such as this. However, it is hoped that this book may be found acceptable as a companion to the very numerous specialized books on the various topics. For those who possess or have access to (and have time enough to read) these, it will serve as a key to their treasures, for those who do not it will form a possible substitute, though I do not relish that term.

No detailed notes of lessons are given, but only the general principles underlying a practice are discussed. For, although the general principles win universal approval, it is

nevertheless true that no two persons would agree on their application to detail. Circumstances differ enormously and those obtaining at one place and at one time cannot be reproduced at another place and at another time. The pupils differ at different places, the intellectual attainments and backgrounds differ, and what is more important, the genius of the teacher differs from person to person. A lesson, conducted successfully by a particular procedure by a particular individual, may be an utter failure in other hands. Its success depended on him alone. Besides, as Thompson says, "when it is time for the printed directions to come in, it is time for the teacher to depart." However, along with the general principles, I have included *general* directions for classroom procedure which would be admitted by common consent and which, it is expected, would serve as signposts that will direct the inquirer to fuller knowledge. And besides, just as self-government is better than good government, so must discovery always be better than direction. Let the teacher discover for himself the best procedure suited to his pupils and adapted to his capabilities, limitations and resources available.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to PROF B M MEEMANSI, B. A., B. T., my erstwhile professor at Kolhapur, for his very kind permission to include in this book his article (which bears his signature) "The Direct Method, the right and wrong of it" which first appeared in 'THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION,' and whose reprint was later made available to me. It is such a lucid exposition of the matter in hand that I thought it best to retain the original rather than caricature it by summarising.

I have, in addition, profited by the notes which my colleague, MR M N BHAT B A., L. T. was kind enough to place at my disposal. I should not omit to thank him and MR M G

THAKAR, P. A. (HONS.) who have read and commented on the whole of the proofs. The suggestions and correction of these gentlemen have contributed greatly to whatever standard of correctness and accuracy has been achieved. For the blunders that may have escaped their scrutiny, I alone am responsible (A few misprints — obvious now — have contrived to creep in.)

It is hoped that the book will be found useful to two types of persons,—(1) The $\pi\tau$ candidate in training, the $\pi\tau c$, and the πv candidate in training, and (2) The work-a-day teacher in actual service, trained or untrained. The former will not only find in the book material (more than he requires, I dare say) sufficient to enable him to answer the questions set at the respective examinations, but also detailed directions relating to practical teaching under classroom conditions. To the latter, it ought to serve as a book of reference, a sort of manual, wherewith to refresh his notions acquired during his course of training. If by any chance he should honour me by turning these pages after his day's work is done I hope that from time to time he may be tempted to smile, not unkindly, at the recollection of his training,—and perhaps at his own earlier follies.

M. B. SHALIGRAM

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METHOD IN ENGLISH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. How to teach English.

A question that requires a long answer. The following factors are to be taken into consideration when we try to answer the question, 'how to teach English?'

(i) The circumstances under which English is taught. (ii) The place where it is to be taught. (iii) The amount of proficiency in the boys. (iv) The amount of time we can devote. (v) The position (of English) which it occupies in the curriculum. (vi) The nature of the child. (vii) The previous experience of the child in learning a foreign language. (viii) The aim we ought to have as determined by the circumstances under which it is taught.

2. The place of English in the curriculum.

There are persons who say that English is being given too much time and that it ought to occupy a place which a foreign language occupies in European countries.

Then there are some who think that English is entitled to special importance and consideration.

Now let us consider the following things:—

(i) Suppose English is given a minor place. Let us see what happens. A pupil learns in vernacular all the subjects. But when he goes to the university where he has to learn all the subjects in English, it will go very hard for him. Such a student has to give up, perhaps, his studies. (ii) The present matriculation examination is both an S. L. C. examination and an entrance examination. If it is to be regarded as an entrance examination, then the university has every right to dictate as regards what kind of candidates it

yvants If on the other hand it is an S L C. examination, then other considerations will prevail. So let the two examinations be different with their aims different and systems different.

So we cannot neglect English Let the vernaculars or modern Indian languages have their due share elsewhere or in the universities But the beginning should be made not in the schools but elsewhere So in school let English have its place It is the *lingua franca* of India It is the source of many of the developments to other languages The lyric, the short story, the short essay etc derive their origin from similar forms of literature in English We are to be guided by facts This is the position which English occupies today and will continue to occupy in the near future It is the medium of instruction in schools and colleges It is the language of the courts. It is the language which serves as a source for many of the developments in modern Indian languages. It is an interprovincial and international medium of expression

3 The aims of teaching English

(1) To enable the child to understand spoken English language (ii) To enable them to read books (iii) To enable them to use the language they have learnt. They can use the language in two ways—by speech and by writing (iv) To appreciate English ways, manners and literature The last point is controversial, but we must know that literature has universal appeal These are the fourfold aims of teaching English

Some ask, 'Is it possible for our Indian boys and girls to appreciate English ways, manners and literature?' Well, literature is universal It is possible to appreciate English literature excepting the purely local touch The attributes of beautiful literature are universal Then again, in the

universities the study of English literature in some form is compulsory. Then is it not desirable to prepare our children for this contingency? Shall we not bring them face to face with people who are civilized? Shall we not widen their outlook? Shall we not make them think that they are not only Indians but men of wider outlook and broader perspective? It is with this cultural aim that foreign languages are learnt in other European countries, not for utilitarian purposes but with the cultural aim.

If we want to teach appreciation of correct, pure English of the English, we must study or select passages written by English masters and not cross-breed English "written especially for Indian students."

So our aim in teaching English is to enable our boys to speak natural, correct English, to enable them to write faultless, unadulterated English, to enable them to appreciate England, English manners, and English outlook on life. Education is for living.

CHAPTER II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

1. The nature of the child while picking up a language

How does a child behave while trying to acquire its mother tongue? At first the whole world seems to be a whole booming world of noise, all unmeaning to it. Later on it finds certain sounds repeated while some less repeated. Then again it finds that certain sounds are repeated by adults in connection with certain objects and in certain situations. Thus it associates these sounds with certain objects and actions. Thus it gives meaning to those sounds which in the beginning was a confused unmeaning mass. And all this it does unconsciously.

{ Then after some time it becomes bold enough to reproduce those sounds. At first it does not succeed but later on it gradually acquires the power of reproduction, of reproducing what it has heard

In the beginning the child imitates. It has the instinct of imitation (an innate tendency to imitate). A child with this tendency tries to imitate. Then there is another tendency to repeat. It is the urge to repeat. It repeats proudly what it can imitate.

Mere imitation or repetition is not sufficient to be able to communicate. So in order to enable it to acquire greater ease it is to be helped.

2 The stages by which a child acquires its mother tongue (The Natural Method)

- (i) The capacity to hear (ii) The capacity to understand (subconsciously)
- (iii) The capacity to relate sound and action or object (iv) The capacity to reproduce
- (v) The capacity to imitate (vi) The capacity to repeat
- (vii) The capacity to compose (subconscious Induction)
- (viii) The capacity of composition by analogy

Can a grown up child use the same steps for acquiring a foreign language? (There is the example of Belgian boys who had gone to England during the Great War and who came to talk English naturally.)

Of course one necessary condition is that the child or any adult gets constant opportunities to learn it or hear it under natural surroundings.

3 Is it possible to pick up a foreign language in its fullness by this natural method?

No. It is not possible to acquire it in all its branches. We can not read or write processes which require conscious

cooperation. They require the effort of the conscious. They are conscious processes. The spontaneous effort is unconscious, while reading and writing, and the power of synthesis or composition are conscious processes.

So we require conscious and unconscious effort to acquire mastery over a language. We have to make use of conscious capacities. We cannot follow the spontaneous method wholly for another reason. At most we will acquire colloquial forms only.

Another objection is that it is a slow method, a method of trial and error, to learn and to unlearn. We want to avoid error as much as possible and we want to speed up the process. We do it by proper grading of matter and by the use of phonetics to correct pronunciation.

Yet another objection against the complete following of this spontaneous method in schools is that we cannot completely reproduce the nature's conditions here. So we have to make use of illustrations and pictures and try to approximate the nature's conditions.

The child is possessed of certain inborn natural forces. It is possessed of (i) The capacity to hear, (ii) The capacity to understand, (iii) The capacity to speak, (iv) The capacity to imitate, (v) The capacity to repeat and (vi) Sub-conscious Induction and composition by analogy.

The child acquires a new language not merely by imitation but rather by composition. Children compose by analogy.

4. How far can this nature's method be followed in the class room?

Not entirely because it is a method of trial and error, a lengthy method. Then there are some limits to its use. Nature's atmosphere cannot be entirely reproduced in the class room. We can not get as much practice in hearing and talking as we do in natural surroundings. We only know colloquial language and a complete knowledge is not possible by this method alone

Then there are two aspects of the process—the active aspect and the passive aspect. The passive aspect is the absorbing aspect and the active aspect is the reproductive or the reflective aspect. Learning process is not complete unless the active aspect comes into play after the absorbing aspect. If language teaching has suffered in India it is because this active aspect has been neglected.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE STUDY

1 The language learning process

All language learning is a habit-forming process. A language is not learnt unless it is used, unless it forms an integral part of the child. A child will not completely learn anything unless it completely lived itself in it, unless it actually practised it (The example of Prof. M's son going over the experiences of the bus, he actually acting the part of the driver and the cleaner is instructive.)

There must be fusion of ideas with words, the idea for which the word stands. This involves process of habit. Mastery of language is a matter of habit. Speaking is a matter of habit. Language learning process is habit-formation.

2 The Rational order of progression

The subject matter to be taught should be such as forms part of the child's everyday experiences, such as the child can later go through. It should be connected with the every day experiences of the child. We must get concrete material, go from the concrete to the abstract, from the known to the unknown.

Learn by doing

The material should be such as means interest, as to present things in a graded manner. Nothing damps a child's enthusiasm more than an understandable difficult matter.

Grammar should come after the language. It is the philosophy of language. This is a common-sense rule. The three principles should therefore be (i) Concreteness (ii) Interest (iii) Gradation

Our business is to see that language is properly understood. If a child speaks, if it hears and if it listens, we have to see that it uses it in its active aspect.

Understanding

Aids to understanding:—

To help proper understanding we have to tackle the every day experience of the child

Children love to think in concrete. Even grown up men can not think for a long time in the abstract. Present grammar in a concrete way. Give explanation of an abstract idea by making it concrete.

Gradation —Present things in a graded manner. Go from simple to the complex. If things are presented in a graded way children will go on learning. There will be a sense of progress created in them. The sense of progress will create interest in them. After the passive aspect of understanding we go to the active aspect.

Practice —We must have sufficient and specific practice. If a word needs twenty repetitions we must do so. Practice should be specific and organized. Attention and practice, and practice of the right thing will lead us to accuracy.

Practice should be {
 attentive
 organized
 sufficient
 specific

Interest gives attentive practice

3 Interest

We attend to things in which we are interested. Interest is latent attention. We must secure the child's interest.

Present things in an interesting way This is the chief characteristic of the modern method as opposed to the old pedagogic methods Willing cooperation of the class is desired by modern methods of teaching Let the class be drilled in an interesting manner Interest is the most important thing in the process of learning Throughout secure the interested cooperation of the class Let the teaching be in the form of a game We do not want spoon feeding Children should actively participate in what we give them Every thing should be secured in an enjoyable manner It is owing to this active aspect or the drill aspect of the learning process being neglected that the modern educational system has suffered a lot Language learning has suffered for want of drill in an enjoyable manner So it is the 'drill', the 'interesting drill' which serves the torchlight and is the great spur which gains progress to our system of teaching

Practice of the right sort is necessary *Accuracy* is the most important point We should try to see that whatever is practised is accurate Children should have nothing but the right There must be accuracy in speech, in spelling and in writing

4 The Rational order of Progression restated

1 *Ears before eyes* Use the capacity to hear to acquire language First attend to the ear training of the child The auditory images of the sound must first be formed Ears must be used first and then eyes

2 *Speech before reading and writing* This seems to be just in the order of nature Reading is speech sight-sound sense It is a more complicated process than speaking Speaking requires only two senses It is impossible to make an attempt at reading before speech The child should have sufficient practice at speech first and then at reading and then at writing First understand and then reproduce

3 Reading.

4 *Reception before reproduction.* Make a child understand first and then reproduce.

5 *Simultaneous reproduction before individual reproduction.* In unison the child gets confidence. Chorus drill should precede individual drill. It does not require much courage for the boy to say with others. It requires less boldness. When he has thus gained confidence by repeating with others, he is bold enough to repeat individually.

6 *Language before grammar.* Natural language learning processes are not enough because we have to speed up. Grammatical study helps us to speed up the process. It secures more accuracy. Grammar should come after the language forms have been acquired. We study grammar for the sake of securing accuracy. It should be taught inductively. The child already knows the forms. He should then deduce the rules.

7 *Sentence first and then the words.* The words by themselves are unmeaning. The unit of thought is a sentence. In order to have some meaning, the words must be related in a sentence. The starting point is the sentence. Psychologically also the sentence should be the point to start with.

8 *Proportion.* The different aspects of language study should receive proper emphasis and due attention. The active aspect is generally neglected. Do not concentrate on the receptive aspect only to the neglect of others. Some emphasize the reading aspect only. This again is defective. Language study has suffered a good deal both in the mother tongue and in the foreign languages owing to this. Defective ear-training, defective reading and defective speech practice are detrimental to language learning process. Proportional emphasis on the different aspects of language learning should be laid. The children should be called upon to

take active part in using the language forms learnt. Defective speech practice is responsible for defective reading. Oral composition should receive as much attention as written composition.

5 The principles of foreign language teaching

(i) Approach through ears. The child should get an atmosphere wherein he should get a chance of hearing good spoken English—he understands English and speaks English.
 (ii) Give scope for understanding unconsciously what he hears. These two things are to be done by the teacher speaking about a topic in connected sentences. Meaningful speech is essential. The child should feel that he should participate later.
 (iii) Maintain an English atmosphere in the class as far as possible by excluding the mother tongue in the class. We ought to secure foreign atmosphere by the exclusion of the mother tongue. The language learning is complete when the child has completed the receptive and reproductive aspects. There must be direct association between the idea or thought and the language in the foreign word. When we have to interpret abstract ideas we may use the vernacular. Do not use vernaculars for assimilation. We can develop direct association by plenty of practice and by the exclusion of vernacular.

Direct method is the Practice method

Direct method is the oral method

Introduce as little as possible vernacular forms because it breaks up the chain of child's language learning process. This does not preclude the conscious effort of the child. Translation for the sake of artistic training and that too at the higher stage and not at the lower stage has of course its place.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

1. The claims of the Direct Method.

- (i) It uses the natural language learning process. (ii) It follows a rational order of progress. (iii) We go from concrete to abstract and make things easy. (iv) It is a method in which children learn by acting. They actively participate. (v) It is a method which is meaningful to them. They feel a sort of pleasure. It gives them a sense of progress. (vi) It is an interesting method. (vii) It is a method in which we give more attention to speech practice; more practice means greater mastery over the language. It is the quickest method of learning a language. (viii) It establishes three-fold associations of the eye, the ear, and the speech.

2. The Direct Method, the right and the wrong of it.

Prof. B. M. Meemainsi, B. A., D. T.

We cannot be blind to the fact that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction in all quarters regarding the low standard of English of the Matriculation candidates in recent years. "What with your B. T. s and S. T. C. s and your, new methods, you have not improved matters. On the contrary the average Matriculate of today cannot write as correctly as he did in our time." This is substantially the view of an educated guardian. The examiners at the Bombay Matriculation, for 1925, say in their report "Some of us cannot help thinking, though we are open to correction, that the fault lies at the door of the so-called Direct method of teaching English which obtains in almost all secondary schools at the present day. The Direct Method, in order that it may yield the very best result, presupposes a number of

Further he used the language units, thus picked up, in new way. In doing so, two natural powers helped the child. They were: subconscious induction and composition by analogy. These powers—to hear, to understand subconsciously, to imitate the speech of others, to repeat and assimilate it, as also subconscious induction and composition by analogy—were the inborn capacities of the child. These were used by the child (or even by an adult) while picking up, not only the mother tongue but also the foreign language, provided he got opportunities of hearing and speaking that language in an atmosphere natural to it. The reformers therefore pleaded that foreign language teaching should begin with hearing and speaking the language in imitation, and not by mastering the rules of grammar and the study of vernacular synonyms. They also contended that the speech practice should be meaningful: that is, it should be on some connected sense-material related to the child's everyday experiences, unlike the disconnected, unmeaning, dull string of sentences in the Translation Series. The new language teachers argued that the reformed method would ensure

1 the aid of auditory and acoustic images in addition to the images of the eye which alone were secured in the Translation Grammar method,

2 greater practice in the use of the language. We could speak a dozen sentences by the time we wrote one, the greater the practice, the easier and quicker it is to form the habit,

3 the interest of the child. Because the practice of speech referred to above was real and living, concrete and meaningful, the interest of the child was heightened by the child's sense of progress.

4 direct association and direct thinking. The child, taught according to the Translation Grammar method, did not enjoy

conditions that are conspicuous by their absence in a majority of Indian high schools" Mr M Champion, formerly Principal, Teachers' College, Saidapet, Madras, after referring to similar reports of other University Examinations, observes, "The quotations at the head of this paper, the resolution of the Inter-University Board, and we believe, the experience of thinking teachers, are accumulative evidence that the Direct Method, as it is practised in Indian schools, has failed to substantiate the claim put forward on its behalf" +

History of the Direct Method

What is wrong with the Direct Method then? Just as a doctor cannot diagnose and say definitely what is wrong with a patient without studying the history of the case, so also we cannot form a diagnosis of this patient, the Direct Method, without studying its history with special reference to Indian conditions

In the beginning English was taught by the Translation-Grammar method the method of teaching foreign languages which obtained in the West at that time During the last quarter of the nineteenth century when psychology came to the aid of education, experienced teachers set themselves to investigate the principles of language learning They found that the Translation-Grammar method was unsound According to them when a child picked up a language he first heard that language as spoken by others in relation to certain life situations He then tried to understand the meaning subconsciously Later he spoke the language in imitation

The Resolution was That the Universities be requested to state whether it is desirable to make some distinction in the B A course between a working knowledge of modern English and a study of English Literature, and if so whether the former alone, or both should be compulsory "

Further he used the language units, thus picked up, in new ways. In doing so, two natural powers helped the child. They were: subconscious induction and composition by analogy. These powers—to hear, to understand subconsciously, to imitate the speech of others, to repeat and assimilate it, as also subconscious induction and composition by analogy—were the inborn capacities of the child. These were used by the child (or even by an adult) while picking up, not only the mother tongue but also the foreign language, provided he got opportunities of hearing and speaking that language in an atmosphere natural to it. The reformers therefore pleaded that foreign language teaching should begin with hearing and speaking the language in imitation, and not by mastering the rules of grammar and the study of vernacular synonyms. They also contended that the speech practice should be meaningful: that is, it should be on some connected sense-material related to the child's everyday experiences, unlike the disconnected, unmeaning, dull string of sentences in the Translation Series. The new language teachers argued that the reformed method would ensure:

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2. greater practice in the use of the language. We could speak a dozen sentences by the time we wrote one; the greater the practice, the easier and quicker it is to form the habit;

3. the interest of the child. Because the practice of speech referred to above was real and living, concrete and meaningful, the interest of the child was heightened by the child's sense of progress.

4. direct association and direct thinking. The child, taught according to the Translation-Grammar method, did not enjoy

his study, he was tongue-tied, he could not think freely and express directly, his speech was stilted and unidiomatic

On account of these decided advantages, a new method, popularly known as the Direct method, was introduced in the West about the end of the last century as a result of the pioneering efforts of Gousser, Paul Passy, Jespersen Sweet and others. The English principals of the Secondary Training Colleges in India, who were much impressed by the novelty and success of the new method in the West, introduced it in India. In this Presidency the method was followed first in Government institutions only, as at that time mainly Government teachers were trained in the Secondary Training College, Bombay. Later the Department of Education encouraged, nay, almost forced, other schools to adopt it. Is it not really strange that a method which is apparently based on sound psychological principles, and has had a fairly long trial, should have produced no substantial results? What then were the causes of its failure?

1. It was a sad mistake of the Government in recommending the adoption of the method by teachers who were untrained, unconvinced and unwilling. This unwise policy has resulted in a mishandling of the Direct Method. What the teacher does may be thus briefly described: he has discarded translation, grammar and composition altogether, he teaches only the reader and that too according to the Translation-Construe method, but gives it the colour of the Direct Method by training boys to answer (in English) set questions. Thus, one of the vital principles of the Direct Method—the fusion of the linguistic symbols—is ignored. Writing is neglected, especially in the lower standards. Queen Grammar, after she was deposed, was, I fancy, very much shocked and it may be her curses that have adversely affected the Direct Method.

2 This shallow study of the Reader, and this neglect of grammar and composition, were due not merely to the laziness of the teachers, nor chiefly to the want of training on their part, the mistakes of the whole-loggers of the Direct Method were to some extent responsible for them. They laid too much stress on the exclusion of the vernacular, with the result that many teachers found it difficult to introduce directly a number of English words and phrases. They would not understand that the use of the vernacular, as a method of interpretation whenever direct association became impossible or inconvenient, was not against the principle of the Direct Method. To quote Prof Tindlay, from his recent book, *Modern Language Learning*, "a picture, a series of actions, sometimes the context, may help him, but very often the best help is to give him the equivalent in his native tongue, and this no doubt can be called translation. It is foolish, for the sake of the Direct method principle, to try and get round the use of the English equivalent by pictures and gestures, although these are a useful aid. What the teacher ought to do is to give the necessary explanations, and thereafter, drop all reference to the vernacular, allowing it to fall below the threshold of consciousness. When we have grasped the meaning, the Direct methodist very properly insists that the learner must connect the strange word directly with the idea which it conveys, and must at all cost refrain from leaving it to its association with a vernacular synonym (pp 20-22)." The second mistake of the extremists was that they belittled the value of grammar unduly. They should have seen that a child gets very little practice in hearing and speaking the foreign language in school. Outside the school, he does not get such practice at all. So that instinctive, unerring language sense cannot be developed without the supplementary help of conscious effort in the form of grammatical study. The

Direct Method need not forbid the study of grammar. All that can be justly said is - grammar should come after the acquisition of language—to account for and to correct mistakes, and thus to help a speedy acquisition of language. In short, the use of subconscious powers should be supplemented by conscious effort. Nature's method cannot be entirely followed under class room conditions, besides, nature's method is a slow method, whereas we have to quicken the pace.

3 The pioneers of the Direct method paid too much attention in the study of English in the lower standards, to oral practice. They had no systematic scheme of composition. They did not realize that the position of English in India was not quite analogous to that of a modern foreign language in the West. English was studied in India not merely for cultural purposes but also for enabling the child to speak and write in English almost as well as he did in his mother-tongue. This Expressive aspect was neglected because they preached the motto, the Reader-as-centre, that is to say, the Reader must be used for the acquisition of language forms for the teaching of composition, and for the study of grammar. This ideal programme is unworkable in practice. Not a single series of Readers has thus far been published to suit these requirements, and the average hard worked teacher is reduced to following the procedure already referred to.

4 Fourthly, schools did not give sufficient practice to children in reading easy supplementary books wherein they could come across the words phrases, and idioms (their old friends, learnt in their readers), in new and varied associations. Such reading greatly helps the fusion of those language forms.

5 The last cause for the unsatisfactory standard of English is the unreal, unsystematic way in which the mother-tongue is taught in the primary and secondary schools. The

vernacular Reader is not thoroughly studied. Grammar is irrationally taught, and does not subserve the purposes of composition, for no composition teaching worth the name is correlated with the deficiency in English as has been amply demonstrated by experimental studies *

REMEDIES

Let us now turn to remedies

1. There shall be no going back to the Translation-Grammar method. At the same time it may be conceded that there is no harm in using the mother-tongue for interpretation, for bringing out the analogy or the difference between the vernacular and English idioms, structures and rules of grammar. One may even go further and suggest the revival of the practice of translation in higher classes. In this connection it is gratifying to note that the Bombay University has reintroduced translation in the new English syllabus for the Matriculation. Besides bringing out the difference between the nature of the two languages, translation and retranslation help the pupils greatly in life. Therefore, once a week, we should take up translation in the higher standards. What we have to guard against is the *translation habit* which prevents direct association between the idea and the foreign word, and which stands in the way of direct thinking in English. That habit is more likely to be contracted in the early stage and hence no regular translation practice at that stage is recommended.

Dr Michael West Bilingualism pp 87-88

Mr V K Banerjee of Anjora The Punjab Education Journal, November, 1939, The Hindu Education and Literary Supplement, dated 5th March, 1935 'English and Vernacular, a study in correlation,'

2 Until we get suitable Readers, the "Reader-as-centro" motto should not be rigidly followed. This does not mean that the different branches of language study should be treated in isolation. On the other hand, the teacher should select sentences and passages for illustrations in the teaching of grammar as far as possible from the texts. He should also base his composition exercises on the reader whenever possible. At the same time it must be allowed that he should have freedom to add to these illustrations and exercises from other books on grammar and composition, in order to enable him to treat these two branches of language study systematically and fully. There is one great advantage in thus modifying the 'Reader-as-centro' motto. The writers or the compilers of text-books would have sufficient scope to write or to choose passages of real literary merit and charm. We should thus be giving our children nothing but the best—not artificial but natural English.

3 We should take care to see that the Reader is intensively studied. That is done by attending properly to word study in the lower standards and to explanation as we progress. It is not enough if a word or phrase is understood in one context. It must be associated with other contexts and used by the children as many times as possible, in speech and in writing. Substitution tables, matching exercises, and other devices should be used to get interesting drill of these phrases and idioms. Explanation, it must be particularly noted, is not paraphrase. It is not the supplying of simpler words from the dictionary for the more difficult ones. It is the discussion of thoughts, the experiencing, the *imagining* of the experiences underlying the verbal expressions which are vague, abstract, or difficult. That discussion should on no account be merely the affair of the teacher, however gifted and charming he might be in his exposition. He must practise the art of self-effacement, pretending sometimes that he is fallible or imperfect, and in this

way to should induce children to participate in the discussion and get their difficulties cleared by self-activity. Our ultimate aim is to make them appreciative, self-reliant readers.

4 There ought to be a coordinated, systematic scheme of grammar and composition. Parts of speech are taught in the same way in all the standards. There is much overlapping. Some knotty points in grammar are not touched at all. In composition there are certain misconceptions. It is believed that in lower standards only oral composition is to be attended to, and that, in the higher standards, only the written composition should be practised. On the contrary, there is need for written composition in some form even in the first standard and for oral composition even in the Matriculation class. It is only a question of more or less. Further, composition has to be taught on a concentric plan, not letters only in lower standards then stories and letters in the middle and everything all of a sudden in the matriculation or the pre-matriculation classes.

(5) An effective plan of supervised study for developing the habit of rapid reading of easy interesting books should be followed. After all, it is good, extensive reading that cures most of the errors connected with the use of idioms, vernacularisms, faulty order of words in sentences, mistakes in spelling, use of prepositions, and the articles.

Lastly, we must adopt rational ways of teaching the mother tongue. Efforts should be made to secure co-ordination and mutual understanding between the teachers of English and the teachers of the mother-tongue. Composition and appreciation in English greatly improve if the foundations of these are laid, well and true, earlier, in the elementary school. It is a pity that language teaching has not evoked much enthusiasm among teachers. While the history and geography teachers are forming associations, meeting in conferences, discussing details of syllabus and

ways of approach in their respective subjects, language teachers are still inert. They must remember that they have a sacred charge and a heavy responsibility. Language is fundamental. On it depends the efficiency of every other subject. On it depends the total result of education. For, as Greening Lamborn puts it, "the means of self-expression, peculiarly man's, is speech; and therefore, education, which means development, is concerned with speech as one of man's highest functions." Will the language teachers bestir themselves?

3. The Translation Grammar Method.

This is the age-old method. The Renaissance educationists emphasized the logical to the psychological method. They centred their attention on the subject-matter rather than on the pupil. In their opinion the most logical way to acquire a foreign language was—

1. The study of foreign words.
2. The study of rules of grammar.
3. Making sentences by the application of the rules of grammar learnt.
4. Translating from the mother tongue into the foreign language and vice-versa.
5. The reader was to be learnt according to the Translation process.

When English was first introduced in Indian schools, it was invariably taught by the Translation method. The various 'Bhashantarpathamalas' gave English words and their vernacular equivalents, rules of grammar and exercises for translation. Every sentence in every lesson of the reader was translated in the class.

Disadvantages of the Translation Grammar method

1. The greatest objection against this method is that it is opposed to the natural process by which a child picks

up a language. Of the natural language learning powers of a child we only use the eye and not enough of the ear and the speech. It presupposes a mature understanding and developed powers of application.

2. Secondly there is no close relation between a thorough knowledge of grammar and the writing of better English. The knowledge of grammar is not a determining factor in the acquisition of a facile style. Grammar should not be taught in the early stage because children cannot understand the abstractions. Grammar should come in after the language forms have been assimilated.

3. A third objection to the Translation method is that the child does not learn idiomatic language. It also misses the colloquial forms. It gets no practice in speaking the new language. Consequently it may be able to understand the written language but it will not be able to express itself with anything like facility or fluency in it.

4. Fourthly, in the Translation method reading is begun before the ear is trained; and writing is begun before reading is mastered, stages that run counter to the psychological process.

The Translation Grammar method has one merit however in that it saves the time of the teacher.

What the Translation Grammar Method has its value.

It is useful in life for translating passages. It is recommended as an artistic exercise. It is invaluable as an aid for the comparative study of different languages, to bring out the difference between the idioms and constructions peculiar to each language. Lastly its utility for purposes of interpretation is undeniable. Notwithstanding these special advantages which accrue in special circumstances it should be remembered that the Translation method should come not in the lower standards but in the higher standards, from std. V

onwards. One translation period a week will be found beneficial.

How to conduct a translation lesson

1 Present the passage to the pupils. 2 Let them read it silently. 3 Test by means of a few questions if they have understood the passage. 4 Ask them to read and mark difficult words and phrases. 5 Ask them to translate it. 6 Then present a model translation. Sometimes a bad translation is given and the pupils are asked to improve upon it. This however, should be done very rarely.

1. Dr West's New Method

At best this is another form of Translation Grammar Method.

Aim,—In the opinion of Dr West the aim of teaching English in India is to enable people to read English. It is with this restricted aim before him that he has formulated his method. He says, "Their need is English to read in order that they may enter that vast repertory of knowledge which is contained in the richest of all languages." While discussing the language policy of India he recommends that those Indian children who have the time and the means should study English to read English for garnering scientific and technical information so that they may impart that information to those who do not know English. Reading and not speaking, is therefore the objective that Dr West keeps before himself.

Principles of his new method—

The two cardinal principles of his method are (1) Economy and (2) Practice which must be specific and adequate. Ability to read is his aim. Reading ability, he argues, requires that the reader should have established in his mind lasting bonds between the sight of the words and

their sense. He therefore advises teachers (a) to practise only those things which lead to reading—to learn to read by reading silently. In his opinion there is no need for the active use of language i. e. speech practice and writing practice; there is no need for the study of 'grammar; nor of words not usually met with in the ordinary reading books; (b) to practise adequately those things which lead to reading. This should be done by determining the minimum number of the most common words and provide sufficient practice by making children come across them a number of times. Time need not be wasted over words which are rarely needed.

The New Method Readers:—To suit his aim and principles Dr. West has brought out a thoroughly graded series of readers. Their broad features are, 1. gradual introduction of words in their order of frequency; 2. new words are printed in bold type; 3. repetition of new words in the paragraph or the story as often as possible; 4. stories are selected as far as possible; 5. there are fewer poems because poems contain unusual words; 6. companion books giving meaning of the words in the mother tongue and hints on their pronunciation; 7. illustrations to make the meaning clearer; 8. supplementary readers to assimilate the new words and to develop a taste for reading; 9. new method composition books to provide drill in the use of new words.

How to use the New Method Readers—

Readers for intensive study:—1. Study of new words with their vernacular meaning and pronunciation with the help of the companion books. 2. Reading, preferably silently, of sentences containing the new words and translating them. 3. Writing down the translation of the sentences or answering questions on them.

In the case of the supplementary readers the procedure

is as follows - 1 pupils are given some questions, 2 pupils read and mark answers 3 pupils write down the answers.

Merits of the New Method—1 thoroughness, 2 suitable assimilation devices, 3 The teacher has definite directions how to proceed Hence even an untrained teacher can follow it blindly.

Defects of the New Method—1 In formulating his aim of teaching English, Dr West does not take into account the position of English in India. Not only must we be able to read a newspaper and a few selected books but we must also be able to speak English fluently and browse in the whole field of literature, classical, technical and modern. We must also be able to compose in English. 2 While recommending his New Method, Dr West has not done justice to the child. He should have taken care to make the process of learning as enjoyable as possible. Mere practice does not secure lasting results. The interest of the child must be enlisted. The future need of the child must not allow us to neglect or overemphasize its present interest. 3 In the new method conscious effort is used predominantly. The sub-conscious, spontaneous capacities of learning articulation comprehension and assimilation are not put to use. Hence children are not drawn instinctively to participate in this process of learning. For grown-ups with a more mature understanding it may be found suitable. 4 The absence of speech practice does not give a sense of reality, life or a sense of progress. 5 To teach reading by reading independent of speech practice especially in the early stages is not possible. Dr West himself realized this and later published *The Red Primer*. 6 The total neglect of grammar and composition is not feasible at present. 7 The limited vocabulary and purposeful repetitions have rendered the style artificial. The studious neglect of idioms and the exclusion of peculiar turns of speech and expression have cramped the diction which has consequently been rendered devoid of literary

charm 8 The stories included in the readers are inordinately long and thereby fail to maintain the interest of the child 9 A free use of the vernacular and the translation tends to contract the translation habit and prevents facile understanding and expression 10 The detached word study is both unmeaning and unsound 11 The bold-typed new words obstruct the flow of reading 12 Owing to the necessity of avoiding unusual words, the study of one of the most important sections of literature, the poetry, is neglected If poems are included they have been specially adapted by eliminating the unwanted words This mutilation is unforgivable The net has of necessity to be cast in narrower waters The beautiful gems of poetry elude us

5 The mother tongue in the teaching of English Why it should be excluded

(i) It prevents the exercise of natural language learning process (ii) Once we give ourselves this freedom we cannot resist the temptation of using it often We must counteract against the translation habit (iii) Words which are not associated with actual situations or objects (although translated) are not fully understood, or remembered or assimilated

How it can be excluded

(i) by taking objects in the class-room or by acting i.e. by direct association with objects or actions sometimes by gestures (ii) by context (iii) by description (iv) by using the English word many times in many situations and thus trying to bring out the idea In the last resort, to save time give the vernacular word

When should the mother tongue be used?

(i) for interpretation occasionally (ii) for testing (a) the meaning of words (b) whether the boys have understood the significance (c) for testing their knowledge (iii) for presenting objectives (iv) during phonetic drill (v) when grammar is to be taught, in the teaching of grammar

CHAPTER V

PHONETICS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH.

Many teachers are very doubtful about the value of phonetics in the teaching of English. They believe that the wearisome mechanical phonetic drill, that making of faces, and observation of the position of the different vocal organs by looking into mirrors, lead, to put it mildly, simply to no fruitful results. They contend that our children will have very few opportunities of going to England, of talking to Englishmen and that therefore we need not be very fastidious about these matters of pronunciation, accent and intonation. Our aim, they argue further, is not to enable children to speak English as Englishmen would do but to help our children to read with understanding English literature, books written in English. Finally they ask, "After all, is there such a speech as standard English?" As there are different variations even in the speeches of men born to it, there is no harm if an Indian cannot speak properly their tongue. As we have American English, Southern English, Northern English, and so on, similarly there is bound to be an Indian English.

On the other hand the supporters of Phonetics contend that the understanding, writing, spelling, and enjoyment of English literature, in fact, the study of the different branches of a language are greatly facilitated by the study of phonetics. Language is essentially sound, "slices of sonority." It is as sound that it first came into being. Script came later. "The sound element in a language is as much a part of the spirit of that language as its syntax or its prosody. It is because we do not feel the sound element in Latin or Greek that their spirit often evades us, and Cicero in quality of mind appears to our imagination something like an Oxford don." (Palmer and Redman).

Judd and Guy. T. Biswell observe, "The pronunciation of a familiar word carries with it in many cases a vividness of feeling and interpretation that no hearing or seeing can duplicate."

Indians are particularly required to study English phonetics because English spelling, unlike their vernaculars, is not phonetic. One letter stands for many sounds in English. Secondly there is a great danger of an Indian child substituting for an English sound the sound of his vernacular which is similar to it (cf 'f' 'w'). Every language has its own peculiarities of sound, stress weakening, assimilation, and intonation. These can be studied thoroughly by the aid of phonetics.

It may be argued that these advantages can be secured by observing and imitating the speech of the teacher. Unfortunately we have in India very few teachers who can speak really well. Unless we introduce the study of and the teaching of phonetics as part of a school course these teachers never will think of improving the speech of their pupils by studying phonetics themselves. Lastly mere observation and imitation take a long time. Conscious efforts by a systematic study of phonetics will help us to achieve better results in a short space of time.

Teaching of Phonetics

In the first standard there should be a regular practice of the elements of vowel and consonant sounds. Instead of making children study two scripts, the phonetic and the ordinary, it is better to use the ordinary letters with some accepted diacritical marks on them. Here it must be noted that this phonetic drill should be closely related to their oral practice. Only those sounds should be introduced which will help him to articulate the word and sentences he has studied during the day. Besides there should be no unmeaning

or strange combinations such as pat, pas. This phonetic drill should come as a step in application in a lesson rather than as a step in the introduction of a lesson. This phonetic drill is necessary for about two or three months.

Later on only the new words, may be studied phonetically. Matters of intonation particularly of question and command sentences should be treated along with the study of these topics in language study. Occasionally the teacher should take special lessons in phonetics to deal with some typical sounds and how they are written of study of 'e' written in different ways, me, beat, chief, and so on. Drew's 'Standard Speech Practice' gives valuable suggestions for such treatment.

Some special lessons to deal with common speech defects are also necessary. These defects may be classified thus (a) defects in connected speech, (b) defects regarding stress, (c) mispronunciation of some sounds.

(a) Under this head we may include wrong intonation, substitution of the intonation of the vernacular for the English one. This is noticed particularly in questions. Failure to speak out and the tendency to make the final words of a sentence indistinct also come under this. Attention to assimilation ('It's' for it is, 'that's' for that is etc.) should be included under this head.

(b) Wrong accents, indistinct final syllables and consonants should be remedied.

(c) The sounds most commonly mispronounced are . o, o, a, f, v, w, t, h, th, r, s. The words usually mispronounced are a, the, that, is, was, been (past tense), ate, image, alternative, another, eleven, together, begin, before, post, forms ending in 'ed', plural forms ending in 's' and 'es'.

The gramophone, the wireless listening, the talkies, are some valuable aids to make up for the absence of oppor-

tinuities of hearing Englishmen. The lessons of the Linguaphone Institute are very useful. We have besides recitation given by Drinkwater and other poets. The speeches of H. M. King George, of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and other public speakers may be occasionally heard. Still it is necessary to take with discount the value of these aids. The following extract from "The Teaching of Modern Foreign Language by the Organized Method" by Hardress O'Grady needs special attention :

"I believe the gramophone to be quite valueless, except as a pastime, in a class room. The use of the gramophone for phonetic purposes, is a return to imitation methods, imitations of bad, because indistinct, pronunciation. The use of the gramophone is a denial of all things which the use of phonetics stands for. But the gramophone in a very small class or for a private student has a considerable value when we come to the question of intonation. But as intonation is a matter of advanced teaching, the gramophone should be used in very advanced classes. The records should be of spoken, not sung, passages. They should be the best that money can buy, and made by the greatest elocutionists of the foreign country. Each little passage should be reproduced for the learner again and again, until the musical rise and fall of the voice is deeply impressed in his memory."

Phonetics came into being after language. It is subject to change.

Its functions are—

(i) To find out by analysis the elementary sounds of the language and then determine how these sounds are produced, i. e. to find out the position of vocal organs while producing them. (ii) To have certain symbols to stand for these sounds. (iii) How these sounds are produced in company. After all these are not uttered in isolation. These

sounds, when, uttered in isolation are not the same when uttered in company. (iv) To determine stress or accent. Certain letters do not receive any attention on account of assimilation, accent, and intonation. Phonetics deals with these points.

If we want to study a language then we ought to study it in a way in which it ought to be studied.

Need for the teaching of phonetics is felt in the lower standards.

Regular every-day (10 minutes) phonetic drill is necessary. Vowels should come first, then consonants, then combinations, and similar but different sounds.

There will be need for teaching of phonetics in the higher standards also. Some lessons may be taken.

Common pitfalls of Indian pupils.—

Defects in connected speech

Defects regarding certain sounds

Defects regarding stress.

Words commonly mispronounced are —phonetics, another, together, beat, begin, began, oral, direct, director, grammar, competition, complete, plant, blow, flew, image, alternative, porter, pour, more, go, show, floor, evening, morning, history, opportunity, executive and many more.

Sounds that need special attention :—o, u, re, slack e, is, was, been.

CHAPTER VI

READING AND SPEAKING.

1. The aim of reading and speaking

Our aim in reading and speaking is to convey some meaning or message (Primary aim). Reading aloud for oneself will help us to understand certain deficiencies.

2. How to secure the aim.

We must create in the reader and in the speaker an urge to speak, a genuine desire to speak by rousing certain instincts. These will help in creating this urge. The instinct to communicate is very important. Therefore it is important to create an urge by arousing (i) The communicative instinct. (ii) The creative or constructive instinct which seeks out-flow through expression. If there is an urge for the creative instinct there is naturally an urge for expressing, taking the inner out (Freud) (iii) Instinct of self-display, to show to the class. The above is the preparation stage for reading and speaking.

3. Process to achieve good reading and speaking.

(1) *Posture* How to stand and speak. To stand erect, not turned towards the book or the front benches. Position of the book should be fifteen inches away from the eyes.

(2) *Speak distinctly.* speak or read in such a way that all the syllables receive proper attention and due weight.

(3) *Stress.* if we stress too much, the speech is not natural. Avoid undue stress. Of course there are certain words in a sentence that require more stress than others.

(4) *Speak in a low tone, low, middle pitch.* Speech in a low tone is effective. Use middle natural pitch, not too low as to become indistinct. Not only low but also slow. Slow but not staccato.

Begin low, Speak slow,

Rise higher, Take fire,

When most impressed, Be self-possessed

The reader or the speaker should be self-possessed.

(5) *Pause.* we have to pause for effect. We have to pause for bringing out the sense. Pausing for the sake of breaks.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY STAGE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE FIRST STANDARD

How should English be introduced to the young learners in the very beginning? How to begin, what to teach, how to teach, are questions that are likely to cause not a little worry to a teacher particularly if he happens to be uninitiated into the proper method. Hence a more detailed discussion of the exact procedure to be employed is called for.

We have seen that a child picks up a language by hearing it spoken and then associating the words with actions or objects. This is the natural process. Hence let the pupils who are about to make a beginning with their English learn it by this natural process. Let them hear it spoken as often as possible, in as many circumstances as possible. While they are hearing it they are understanding it subconsciously, trying to relate sound and action or objects. Having gained confidence they will proceed to repeat and reproduce it. The more time and opportunities they have of hearing it and practise talking it, the better. The teacher, therefore, must refrain from speaking the vernacular lest he interrupts and thereby delays the learning process.

The main stage during the first two months in the first standard will, therefore, be the oral stage. The process will be as follows: 1. Ear-training and subconscious understanding; 2. testing by showing and doing, 3. phonetic drill or the training of the articulatory organs, 4. reading of words. 5 writing.

1. The three stages

1. The hearing stage, ... the first two weeks.
2. The speaking stage. ... the next four weeks.
3. The reading stage ... the next two weeks.

*1. The hearing stage :—*1. Ear-training. The child receives ear-training. While the child is listening and is getting its ears trained to the new sounds, care should be taken to ensure that these foreign sounds are not set in an unmeaningful way. They should hear complete sentences, albeit small and very simple, spoken by the teacher upon some topic. This helps the child to understand subconsciously quicker and better what it is hearing. 2. All the time the child is hearing it is understanding subconsciously. Testing at this stage would be premature for its articulatory powers are as yet not developed. The bonds between sounds and actions, objects or ideas are in the process of formation. They will soon begin to be cemented. 3. Testing by showing or doing. We test the children by displaying various objects to them and asking them to point them out. If they are able to do so we can be sure that the associations between the objects and the foreign words which stand for them have been accomplished. 4. Phonetic drill. We drill the children in the various vowel and consonant sounds occurring in English to train their articulatory organs. We are thus preparing them to utter the words and sentences in English. 5. The reading of words. By this time the children will have been able to point out the object when the foreign word denoting that object has been uttered or written on the board. Now they may read the word. 6. The writing of words. Finally they may write down the words in their notebooks. The notebooks should be four-lined. The teacher should likewise rule the blackboard in the four line manner and should write the words clearly, distinctly, employing the Print Script.

This procedure should be followed for the first two weeks.

*2. The speaking stage :—*1. For testing the children we make them speak. We may now have less of the phonetic

The following topics and words connected with them may be taken—everyday objects familiar to a child such as the classroom and the furniture in it, stationery, parts of the body, dress, fruits, the breakfast table, vegetables, flowers, colours, animals, games, metals, vehicles, coins, the playground, the garden, relations, a street scene, the market, the post office, numbers, etc. While these words are being introduced take care to see that suitable 'do' words (verbs), appropriate to each topic, are also introduced at the same time. Such verbs are, do, come, go, shut, open, eat, drink, cut, put, show, play, forms of 'to be', smell, walk, run, stand, sit, go, sleep, get up, give, take, write, etc. Even the simplest of sentences requires at least a noun or a pronoun and a verb. Unless we introduce both nouns or pronouns and verbs, the teacher would not be able to speak a complete sentence and the pupils will not be equipped to take part in conversation. Each topic should be taken up along with a verb or verbs which will go with it. For example, while introducing fruits, we shall be requiring the use of such verbs as eat, taste, cut, like, etc.

3 Specimen syllabus in English for Standards I, II and III

STANDARD I

1 *First Quarter* —Introduction of orders, introduction of words,—topics and words relating to everyday objects familiar to the child, along with suitable verbs (for these see above)

Questions beginning with what, who, how many, where, etc. General conversation on objects, pictures. Telling very simple stories with the help of pictures. Children answer questions on these pictures and retell the stories.

The introduction of the Reader. The first five lessons may be taken (with reading)

Grammar—Use of pronouns such as I, we, you, he, she, it, possessive pronouns like my, our, your, his, her, its, their, simple present tense only, making questions and negatives, use of the forms of the verbs, 'to be', 'to have' and other verbs introduced from time to time First person, second person and third person, singular and plural of nouns (regular and irregular), use of capital letters

Composition—copying of alphabets, oral composition—the pupils speak, they describe simple things or objects or pictures They answer questions They tell a story either in part or whole In written composition they recognize printed words or sentences and write them down

2 Reader—Further 5 lessons may be read

Grammar—Present continuous tense, future tense, the agreement of first person, second person, third person and verb drilled again Forms like me, us, him, her, them, etc

Use of adjectives Making of questions and

negatives of sentences involving the use of

tenses done Articles and adjectives to be picked up by the pupils

Composition—Oral composition—Conversation on pictures, telling a story, dramatization and dialogues Description of an object or a picture Written composition—writing down a very simple, short story discussed in detail orally Filling in gaps Mismatched exercises

3 Reader—Further 6 or 7 lessons may be read Recitation of 4 or 5 poems either from the reader or selected by the teacher

Grammar—Simple past tense, changing the tenses (simple present, present continuous, future and

simple past only) Use of 'shall' and 'will',

Use of 'can' Making of questions using 'who',

'what', 'where', etc Parts of speech—picking up

nouns, pronouns, adjectives Comparative and superlative degrees

Third Quarter

Composition—Oral composition with the aid of various devices. Telling stories with the help of pictures, dramatization and dialogues continued.

Written composition—pupils to write down answers to questions. To write down stories, other written exercises given by the teacher.

4 Further 6 or 7 lessons with reading. It is presumed that the exercises based on each lesson will be taken up along with the lessons. For recitation 3 or 4 more poems.

Grammar—Making questions with whom, whose, when, and how. Past continuous tense. Changing of tenses (simple present, present continuous, future, past, and Fourth past continuous). Naming and picking up the Quarter parts of speech—noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb and conjunction only. To turn an assertive sentence into a question and vice versa.

Composition—Oral composition continued. Pupils to be encouraged to talk in English. The teacher on his part will all the while be with the pupils speak only in English and scrupulously exclude the vernacular despite the many temptations to use it.

Written composition—Pupils should be able to write five to ten sentences on simple everyday subjects like 'The Garden', 'My School', 'A Dog', 'The Moon', 'A Horse', 'A Mango', or on a picture.

STANDARD II

1 Reader—10 to 12 lessons from the Reader. 4 or 5 poems for recitation. Exercises attached to each lesson to be solved.

Grammar—Revision of the tenses and other grammatical portion done in the previous year. Words and the work they do in a sentence. Simple analysis of sentences in the 'box' form—the 'who' box and the 'do' box in other First words the 'subject' and the 'predicate', agreement Quarter of the subject and the predicate in number and person again drilled. Kinds of sentences—Question,

Command and Statement—to be recognized or changed from the one to the other

Composition—Simple form of letter-writing. To write a letter to father, mother, brother, sister or friend (5 to 10 lines) Pupils should be able to write a simple story or from 5 to 10 lines on such subjects as 'The Camel', 'The Sky', 'A Clock', 'A Postman', etc. Oral composition by various devices to be continued. Every opportunity should be made of encouraging pupils to talk in English. The everyday business in the class, especially during the English periods, should be entirely transacted in English.

2 Reader—Further 8 to 10 lessons may be read, three or four poems for recitation.

Grammar—Changing of tenses continued, revision of plurals of nouns, revision of parts of speech, sufficient practice should be given. **Idea**
Second Quarter of gender—masculine, feminine and neuter—should be given.

Composition—Oral composition to be continued, discussion on objects, pictures, persons, events, etc. In written composition five to ten sentences to be written on 'A House', 'A Parrot', 'A Fair', 'A Shepherd', etc. Topics for composition may profitably be chosen from the Reader itself.

3 Reader—Further 7 or 8 lessons. Three or four poems for recitation. Exercises on lessons.

Grammar—Parts of speech (Prepositions and conjunctions) Kinds of nouns—common nouns and proper nouns. All the tenses come so far and present perfect and past perfect. Revision of degrees of comparison.
Third Quarter Transitive and Intransitive verbs, picking out object. Active and passive voice—passive voice of verbs in present, past and future tenses. In punctuation, the full stop, the comma, the sign of interrogation and the inverted commas with their proper use may be taken.

Composition—Further four compositions of about ten lines each on 'A Horse', 'The Sun', 'A Tiger', etc. Some of the stories from the Reader may be written. Oral composition and description from pictures, or story-building from sets of pictures to be continued.

1 *Reader*—Further 6 or 7 lessons. Two or three poems for recitation.

Grammar—Revision of the portion done. Further drilling in the changing of voices. Active to Passive

Fourth Quarter and vice versa in all tenses (Simple present, past and future tenses). The function of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions in a sentence and showing their relation.

Composition—Ten sentences about 'The Railway Station', etc.

STANDARD III

1 *Reader*—The first ten lessons. Four to five poems for recitation. Exercises on lessons.

Grammar—Revision of tenses and of parts of speech, thorough drilling in them. The same words as

First Quarter different parts of speech. Number and Gender and Case (Nominative, objective and possessive case). Kinds of nouns and pronouns.

Composition—Letter-writing, A letter to the father or mother or friend. Ten to twelve sentences about topics from the Reader or chosen by the teacher such as 'The Rain', 'Games', etc.

2 *Reader*—Further ten lessons. Two to three poems for recitation.

Grammar—Revision of Transitive and Intransitive verbs.

Second Quarter Analysis of a simple sentence in tabular form. Complement. Revision of Active and Passive voice. Moods—Indicative, Imperative, Subjunctive and Infinitive. Moods. Verbal nouns.

Revision of kinds of nouns

Composition --Continued practice in oral composition
Story-telling from pictures Listening a story from a set of pictures
Writing down of stories and descriptions such as
'The Policeman', 'The Postman', 'The Hill', 'Our Trip', etc.

3 *Reader* --Further six or seven lessons Two to three poems for recitation

Grammar --Use of Relative pronouns Revision of tenses
(present, present imperfect, present perfect, past,
Third past imperfect, past perfect, future, future
Quarter imperfect, and future perfect) Revision of
degrees of comparison

Composition --Story-building from pictures, not all the pictures need be shown Stories from the Reader may be written, a letter or two about a trip perhaps, a cricket match, etc

4 *Reader* --Further nine or ten lessons Two or three poems for recitation

Grammar --Revision of grammar portion done Kinds of adverbs--of time, place, manner and degree Kinds of adjectives All the twelve tenses--present, present imperfect, present perfect, present perfect continuous, past, past imperfect, past perfect, past perfect continuous, future, future imperfect, future perfect and future perfect continuous Verbs for conjugation in all these tenses may be given Parallel vernacular translation of these conjugational forms may be given Articles, their kinds and use Simple Parsing

Composition --Picture composition continued, compositions on topics like 'A Motor-car,' 'A Bicycle', 'A Journey to', 'A Letter to', etc.

The scheme suggested above is recommendatory and not mandatory It merely represents a purposeful division of work to be accomplished An energetic and resourceful

the Direct Method is the Practice Method. It is a process of habit formation. Hence the teacher will have to tax his resourcefulness to the utmost to ensure adequate practice. Many words, beautifully interlaced, nevertheless lapse into oblivion for want of fixation. The teacher, therefore, will make use of all the pleasant devices at his command to ensure a permanent assimilation of the new language forms learnt. In most school curricula, English has been assigned not more than two periods a day. An ideal arrangement for learning a language by the natural method would call for hearing it for as much time in a day as possible. Since this is not practicable in school where other subjects have to be taught in addition to English, the teacher must make the most of the time allotted to him. He must utilise every minute of the allotted time in giving either hearing practice or speech practice.

7 *Accuracy* As the pupils look to the teacher for a model and imitate him, he must be scrupulously accurate in what he speaks and how he speaks it. Hence the importance of correct speech on the teacher's part. Whatever he does or speaks will be imitated by his pupils. Habits once formed tend to become permanent. It is easier to learn than to unlearn. Hence the teacher should exercise the greatest caution that he does not present to the pupils anything that is incorrect. Similarly he should never allow pupils to speak incorrectly. He should pounce upon the incorrections then and there. He should not wait to ask for corrections from the pupils but should supply the correct word or the form promptly.

8 *Questioning* The questions should be short and should not demand difficult and lengthy answers. They should not be thought-provoking (especially in standards I and II). The answers should be such as could be formed from the questions themselves by the substitution of a word or two only. The questions should be definite and pointed. They should be short, easy and asked in a repeated way. This

children should be encouraged and trained to speak freely and not in a staccato manner. The habit of prompt response to a given stimulus should be developed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRINT SCRIPT

Of the two marks of a trained teacher, good speech and good writing, the latter does not seem to have received as much attention as it deserves. A tour of classrooms and a perusal of blackboard writing executed by the teachers reveals a sorry tale of affairs. The cursory hand or the 'fourth' alphabet still rules. The letters in the cursory style merge indistinctly into one another and assume fantastic forms, rendering the final product not only shabby and illegible but often irritating in the extreme. This haphazard, slipshod way of writing leaves behind a rich legacy in the form of illegible writing by the pupils and ridiculous errors in spelling. To the methodical mind with a turn for neatness it is an outrage. It is comforting to think that in almost all the training colleges in India, the employment of the Print Script has now been made obligatory, both for the teachers and for the pupils. A trained teacher will use it always. A child will learn it in the First Standard and will use it exclusively even up to the Seventh Standard. It will learn no other.

History of the Print Script: The movement for the adoption of the Print Script started during the Great War. When some of the essays for a competitive examination were brought to the notice of H. M. King George V, he remarked on the good handwriting of some of the candidates. On enquiry it was found that the writing belonged to some girl students of a particular High School. The Head Mistress of the school stated that she found the Print Script highly

useful and that her experiments in this direction had met with complete success. This movement rapidly spread and was given a great impetus. At present it is receiving great attention from all quarters.

Advantages of the Print Script 1 *Economy* It is so easy to learn. The same script serves both for reading and for writing. Hence there is no need to learn a separate script for writing. 2 *Legibility* It is very easy to read and is restful to the eyes. There will be no more need for headaches over deciphering and decoding unreadable writing which could only be read by the writer himself. 3 *Artistic* It looks incomparably neater and more methodical than the cursive writing. It is pleasing to the eye. Pupils acquire a good handwriting from the very beginning and stick to it. A good handwriting is an asset in life. 4 *Speed* Contrary to expectation the Print Script is actually faster to write than the cursive variety. Experiments under controlled conditions were carried out at different centres over a prolonged period to ascertain which script was the quicker to write. Print Script was found to be the quicker of the two. Incidentally the girls did better than the boys. The comparative slowness of the cursive script may be explained by the fact that in it the pen is not lifted from the paper until a word is completed. Hence each letter is joined, thus involving unnecessary movement and longer travel for the penpoint, necessitating a longer time. In the Print Script you lift your penpoint after each letter is completed thus saving unnecessary pen-travel and the consequent loss of time. With practice great speed can be attained. Certain persons might imagine that a person who has all along been writing in a cursive style would find it very difficult to be a convert to the Print Script. This is not so. Usually a month or two spent in practising the Print Script and using it exclusively will bring about the desired conversion. The convert will

then rarely revert to his old style of writing, so convinced will he be of the superiority of the new script from all points of view

How to teach the Print Script? Teach the pupils to draw simple straight lines and circles. Every letter of the alphabet can be made up of lines, half lines, circles or half circles. The pupils should learn to draw straight lines, circles, half circles, and little curves. They should then be shown how, by joining some of these, the different letters are formed. Contrast between letters may be brought to their notice e g b is the reverse of d, and p part of q. The accompanying chart is self-explanatory

The pupils in the first standard just beginning to write should use four-lined notebooks. The teacher also when he writes on the blackboard should likewise rule the board before writing. All the capital letters will be written between the first and the third line. As for the other letters, the body will be written within the second and the third lines, touching them, the extensions, if any, reaching the first or the fourth line as the case may be. Thus the extensions of b, d, f, h, k, l, t, will reach the first line, the extensions of g, j, p, q, y, will reach the fourth line, the main bodies of the above letters and the letters a, c, o, i, m, n, u, r, s, u, v, w, x, and z will be confined between the second and the third lines. In the second standard the four-lined notebook may be discarded in favour of a two-lined one as, by then, the pupils will have known by practice how each letter is written. In the third standard single-lined note-books may be introduced but personally I am inclined to the continuance of the two-lined ones to the end of the third standard.

In taking down what has been written on the blackboard the pupils who are trying clumsily to imitate, are bound to commit mistakes. Hence the teacher must

scrupulously examine the notebooks everyday and correct the mistakes and point them out to the pupils. He should also get them to rewrite the corrections. If this correction work is neglected or postponed, the pupils will be habituated to the wrong forms or the incorrect ways of writing letters, a misfortune which must at all cost be avoided. A teacher can not be too punctual or too prompt in this respect.

CHAPTER IX

STORIES AND HOW TO TELL THEM

Place of a story—Stories are of perennial interest. The literature of every country, every people, abounds in stories, fairy tales, folk tales, stories of adventures, stories of heroes and so on. A well-told story grips the mind. It casts its spell over the young and the old alike. Who has not seen children sitting spellbound, statue-like, around a gifted storyteller, perhaps the mother or the grandmother or the grandfather? Even the grownups are not above the fascination of good stories. How often do we turn to our old favourites and lose ourselves in them with the same ecstasy as of yore. In all ages, in all climes, the story has occupied an important place and has never failed to interest. The educationist, therefore, turns with eagerness to the medium of the story for imparting education. Of the results he is seeking for, he is assured and he knows fully well that the lesson will go home. Here indeed is a pleasant way of learning. The story-approach or the story-medium is, therefore, employed in History, in Geography, in Science. In History there are the stories of heroes, of martyrs, of personal adventures, of battles, of valour, of breathtaking escapes, secret passages, dark underground vaults or dungeons. Later on you can graduate to the story of nations, of the rise and fall of men

and of empires. In Geography, we have stories of exploration, the stories of Dr Livingston, Mungo Park, Marco Polo, Columbus, Captain Cook, of polar explorers like Captain Scott, Admiral Peary, Dr Nansen, Captain Amundsen and others. These stories of exploration, pioneering days, colonisation and of their attendant adventures are as absorbing as they are educative. In science too there is the story of electricity, of scientists and inventors and their incredible achievements. The rapid progress of science during the last century in the realms of physics, chemistry, biology is a romance. So much for the value of a story as an educative medium.

Wherein lies the attractiveness of a story?

• 1 *Joy* It undoubtedly provides joy to a child. In this respect it is a work of art. Like other forms of literature it is a work of art and its primary aim is to give joy. Let the children enjoy the story first and foremost. 2 *Identification* It releases the child from the hard realities with which it feels it is surrounded. The world is imperfect for it for it feels that in many situations it can not assert itself. It can not be what it would love to be. This instinct of self assertion is suppressed and must find an outlet for expression. In actual life this is not possible. But a child can do so in imagination. While listening to a story or reading it, a child is enabled to transport itself to a world created by itself. It is enabled to identify itself with the hero in the story and relive all the adventures. The story is a magic carpet, the Aladdin's lamp, that wafts a child away into a fascinating new world, the carpet that enables it to rise from its desk, float gaily through the window, soar over the playground and sail away on some adventurous quest. The child is with the big game shikari on his safari hunting the prowling lions in tropical forests, it is with the shipwrecked sailors struggling through unknown seas to

desert islands, it is matched with the fierce warriors in darkest Africa and has the better of them. It can revisit the past, or travel in the present as far as the uttermost ends of the earth. And all this in imagination without so much as twitching a muscle! It is intensely pleased with itself for the dominating part it plays, for the exaggerated importance that is his, for the feeling of superiority over others. That it does so in mere imagination, in a fictitious world, in a creation of its own making, is of no consequence. That it can give vent to its pent-up feelings is enough and it pleases him and his vanity. In projecting itself into the ideal being, the hero, the explorer, the charming prince who rescues a damsel in distress, and slays the demon or the dragon, Slavius, Napoleon, it is all the while satisfying something which would be impossible in the matter-of-fact world in which it lives. This tendency to identify oneself with something what one is not but what one would love to be, of living and dominating in a make-believe world of our own creation, be it ever so ethereal and ephemeral, is known in psychology as 'catharsis.' 3 *It gives scope for the dramatic instincts of the child.* When the story can lend itself to dramatization the child can play the part of different characters in it. 4 *The exercise of a child's make-believe imagination is made possible.* Refer to the foregoing explanation. 5 *The human interest.* It is the human element in the stories that make them of abiding interest to children.

The educational value of stories --

Why is it that we use stories in education? We have discussed above why stories are so interesting and why the children are drawn instinctively to them. It therefore stands to reason that so fascinating a medium should be made to serve educational purposes. 1. *Stories are used because the story approach is an interesting method, making even*

dull subjects interesting. They thus at once solve the problem of attention. Interest is latent attention. 2 They establish a very intimate contact between the teacher and the taught. This establishment of a happy relation between the pupils and the teacher is a very desirable by-product. Children love and desire the company of those whose company is a source of joy. 3 By securing the children's attention, the stories develop the habit of concentration. Discipline automatically reigns.

The elements of a good story

1 *Simplicity* A good story should be simple in its content. Longdrawn, complicated stories involving too many details fail to maintain interest to the end and should be avoided. In involved, overelaborate stories, there is a real danger of losing the thread and getting lost in the wilderness of details. Thus the homogeneous picture which the child is trying to piece together is broken up. The spell is broken, the mind is jarred. One point at a time should be developed. Long descriptions, plots, subplots and counterplots have no place in a good story. 2 *Sequence* A good story should open quietly, unfold gradually and lead finally to a climax. The natural sequence of events should be maintained. There should be no dramatic diversions, no abrupt beginnings or abrupt ends. When the climax is reached, the story should be left there. There should be no anticlimax as it puts an undue strain on the emotions of a child. 3 *Significance* A good story will have some significance, however small. This should however be merely suggested in passing and not told. Leave it to the children to discover it. The moral whatever it is, is best caught than taught. A deliberate harping on the moral shatters the reverie and may make the children painfully aware of the fact that the story was after all, a special

concoction designed to instal into their minds some moral potion, that it was, after all, not real. The joy of the children lies in believing that it all actually happened. A deception, no doubt, but a willing and a happy one none the less. However, care should be taken to see that no stories are selected where the forces of evil or ideas repugnant to established ethical concepts are shown to be victorious in the end. 4 *Action* Stories that are full of action are ever popular. Action should follow action. Nowhere should the narrative be allowed to slacken. A story without action, and plenty of it, is at best a dull one and even the most gifted of storytellers will find it difficult to prevent interest from flagging. 5 *Capable of being dramatized* If possible the story should be such as can be reduced to a little play which could then be enacted by the children. 6 *Repetition and rhythm* Rhythm, especially in the lower standards, is essential. Repetition of some statements or even of whole sentences at different stages of the story is desirable. Such repetition promotes perfect understanding and proper fixation. Children love repetition as it gives them a sort of confidence in listening to and understanding a story. They are assured of their progress. The story of 'The Three Bears' wherein the mother bear and her two cubs say the same words when each in turn sees its bed slept in, its chair sat upon, its knife and fork used, is based on sound psychological principles.

How to tell a story effectively :

A story that it may be productive of the maximum effect must be properly told. Even the finest story which in proper hands would have held the audience spellbound, can be ruined if mishandled. Inattention, yawns, movement, fidgeting follow in the wake of a story in incapable hands. There are some gifted storytellers who are 'untie the

manner born'. But others with assiduous practice can hope for a fair measure of success in this direction. The requirements of a good storyteller are. 1. *Preparedness*. Thorough preparation is required. The teller must know the story with all its sequence by heart. He must himself live through the story. It is only when a story has appealed to him that he can hope to tell it with success. There should be no, 'but wait a minute. I forgot to tell you one thing which I should have told you before.' 2. *Proper acting and emphasis*. The teacher should be able to tell a story with the proper voice, intonation, inflex and distribution of emphasis. He should lower or raise his voice to suit the different situations in the story, that he may reproduce as far as possible the atmosphere in the story. Suitable gestures and acting are also an indispensable equipment of a storyteller's art. A teacher should rehearse aloud at home. 3. *Be one with the class*. The teacher should be able to efface every trace of selfconsciousness and be one with the class. He should lose himself in the story. He should speak slowly. There should be no interruptions. Once begun, the story should be continued to the end. If there are likely to be any difficult words that need explanation, they should be explained beforehand. Interrupting the story by stopping to explain words spoils the whole game.

The story in the first standard.

The first two or three months in the first standard are devoted to eartraining and speech practice. By the end of this period they will have mastered some words, nouns, pronouns and verbs, and thus will have been equipped to talk in English and understand what is said in English. This will be the time for the Reader to be taken up. But before the transition to the reader is made, two or three simple stories may be told to them. These stories should not contain

a single word that is not known to the pupils. If some words in them are new to them, they should be introduced beforehand. This is the preparation for the telling of the story. The story should be introduced by means of a picture specially drawn to illustrate it. It should be told by constant reference to it by the teacher. After the story has been told by the teacher twice or thrice, questions may be asked on it. Then the pupils may be asked to tell only a part of the story—one pupil beginning the story, another continuing it, and so on, till it is completed. Then one of the bright pupils may be asked to tell the whole of it. In the end every pupil in the class should be able to relate the story. The pupils then read the story. A specimen story suitable for telling before the Reader is taken up is given below.

THE LITTLE GIRL AND HER LITTLE KITTEN

Here is a little girl. Here is a little kitten. The little girl has a little puppy, a big cat, a red hen and a black sheep. One day the little puppy goes to the little girl and says, "Wow, wow", and the little girl gives it milk. The little kitten sees this. The little kitten goes to the little puppy and says, "I am hungry. I want milk." The little puppy says to the little kitten, "Go to the little girl and say, 'Wow, wow,' and the little girl gives you milk." So the little kitten goes to the little girl and says, "Wow, wow." The little girl says to the little kitten, "What is this? Go away!" and the little kitten is very sad.

Then the little kitten goes to the red hen and says, "I am hungry. I want milk." The red hen says to the little kitten, "Go to the little girl and say, 'Cluck, cluck,' and the little girl gives you milk." So the little kitten goes to the little girl and says, "Cluck, cluck." The little girl is angry and says, "What is this? Go away!" and the little kitten is very sad.

Then the little kitten goes to the black sheep and says, "I am hungry. I want milk." The black sheep says to the little kitten, "Go to the little girl and say, 'Baa, baa,' and the little girl gives you milk." So the little kitten goes to the little girl and says, "Baa, baa." The little girl is angry and says, "What is this? Go away." and the little kitten is very sad.

Then the little kitten goes to the big cat and says, "I am hungry. I want milk." The big cat says to the little kitten, "Go to the little girl and say, 'Miau, miau,' and the little girl gives you milk." So the little kitten goes to the little girl and says, "Miau miau." The little girl says to the little kitten, "Come, my little kitten. Drink this milk." The little kitten drinks the milk and the little kitten is very happy.

It will be noticed that the story is based on the minimum number of words all known to the pupils and abounds in repetitions of situations and words. While the story is being told, the repetitions are so many that the pupils hear the same words again and again, and while retelling the story themselves, will have to use the same words again and again. The story will thus be easily remembered and learnt.

Stories, at least till the end of the third standard, should always be introduced by means of pictures specially drawn for them. Constant reference should be made to the picture while the story is being developed.

CHAPTER X

READERS

Method in the last resort will always be determined by the subject matter we teach, the manner of its expression and by the aim we have in view.

Requisites of good Readers

1 Aim We have noted elsewhere that our aim in teaching English is not only to make children understand English but also to lead them to an appreciation of English environment. The cultural life of a people,—their manners, customs, national traits, aspirations,—must inevitably be reflected in their literature. You cannot divorce the language forms from the social, cultural background or the living spirit in the language will evade us. Hence one of the stipulations that condition the selection of suitable readers should be that they promote this cultural aim of language teaching. It is for this reason that stories or narratives that have Indian events or atmosphere as their background should be excluded. The children know the stories, the atmosphere is familiar to them, they merely read the account in English. The children therefore cannot be expected to evince in the Indian stories the same interest which they exhibit in a story, the subject and atmosphere of which is to them foreign and therefore new.

2 Suitability The idea is that they should minister to the interest of the children. They should be suited to their different stages of development. The contents or the subject matter of the Readers should be such as is calculated to interest them. The age of the pupil for whom the particular reader is intended must be taken into consideration. Psychologists have studied the problem and have determined certain instincts and interests of children at various ages. At the age of eight a child goes in for fairy tales and stories of children in other lands. At the age of nine fairy tales of a more complex type are required. Already interest in a simple fairy tale is fading. At this age the child is interested in stories of its own environment such as a visit to a fair, a gathering, etc. At the age of ten fairy tales are definitely out of favour. Interest is kindled in stories of adventures. Things mechanical also make an

appeal. At the age of eleven animal stories hold the field. The age of twelve calls for school stories or biographies or mystery tales. In the ages of thirteen and fourteen there is a carryover of interests from the preceding ages with the addition of a passion for jungle tales or tales of wild life. Stories of exploration or travels also make their claim felt. Thereafter tastes vary and books dealing with diverse subjects will be needed. Such, in brief, are the interests that govern children at the various stages of their growth. A careful compiler or editor of Readers will allow himself to be guided in his selection of subject matter by the investigations of the psychologists, recorded above.

3. *Gradation.* Just as the subject matter must be suited to the varying ages of the pupils it must also be graded from the point of view of the difficulty of language forms or words to be introduced. Unfamiliar words or idioms should be introduced gradually. The readers should be progressively difficult. The reader should not be too easy or too difficult. The pupil should not be compelled to refer to the dictionary or the teacher for every other word. A reader should neither be so difficult as to discourage any effort on the pupil's part, nor so easy as to make it superfluous. The influx of new words should be regulated. For every one thousand running words Dr. West introduces seventeen new words. Four to five new words in a page would best answer the purpose. The words selected should be common and useful as far as possible. Here comes the important question of word selection. The principle of utility and word frequency is a sound one, but in practice is followed more in its breach than in its observance. More often than not the compiler and his sweet will are the only judges as regards the selection of words. Sometimes useless words are included to the exclusion of useful and necessary words. Utility rather than the size of the word should influence the choice. On the other hand

the compilation of a useful wordlist presents many difficulties. Thorndike selected forty-one documents of varying nature and counted various words for frequency. But the reliability of the wordlist prepared by him was questioned by Dr West, Mr Taucett and others. They argued that the selection of the different documents as a basic material will be governed by the leanings of the selector, the historian, the scientist, the poet will each fish in his favourite waters. This weightage given to the different branches of human knowledge will in the end prove fatal to the compilation of a satisfactory wordlist. Secondly, if a word is selected, what about its numerous derivatives? How to list these words, as one or as different words? Again a single word is expressive of several shades of meaning. Will it be linguistic honesty on the part of a teacher, after explaining perhaps by the direct method what is meant by the 'branch' of a tree, to expect his pupils to understand what is meant by the 'branch' of a family or by a 'branch' of knowledge?

A satisfactory wordlist, therefore, cannot be compiled and even if it is compiled, there would be the problem of manufacturing or making to order prose or poetry to serve as vehicles for the words in the list. We can only shudder at the final product. We are reduced in the end to offer to the compiler a few suggestions that may guide him in his effort. As far as possible he should choose such passages, at least in the beginning, as contain common environmental words. These should refer to the activities of mankind in general. Then would come special environmental words referring to particular localities of the world. After these may come words which an average pupil need not know. Elegant variations of essential or general words, viz 'express', 'affirm', for the word 'say', or 'perform', 'accomplish' for the word 'do', should be reserved for the higher standards. *4 Assimilation* With a view to assimilation, words

previously learnt or introduced should be made to recur as often as possible. Suitable assimilation exercises should be appended to each lesson. Dr. West does this thoroughly in his Readers. When the pupils meet with the old friends recurring again and again, they get to know them thoroughly.

5 *Meaningful* Isolated, disconnected and hence unmeaningful sentences have no place in good readers. The text should as far as possible be a continuous one divided into chapters, or, failing that, should consist of self-contained units. The pupils will then take interest in what they read.

6 *Interest and variety* As already stated above, the subject matter should be interesting. Prose lessons should consist of easy stories or simple descriptions, in the later stages we may have didactic material. In the earlier stages dialogues or simple plays for acting may profitably be included.

7 *A fair representation of poetry* The text should contain plenty of poetry, provided the right kind of poetry is selected. In the earlier stages nursery rhymes or very simple poems, and in the later stages, narrative and descriptive poems should be chosen. Mystic, philosophic poems, poems whose emotional correlates lie beyond the ken of pupils' experiences should best remain untouched.

8 *Contact with foreign minds* The material selected should be such as would make communication with foreign minds possible. There should be pieces written by Englishmen in English settings. English is to be taught as a living language, a language in which Englishmen not only make themselves understood by one another but in which they express their thoughts, feelings, and the whole gamut of emotions native to man, the same as we do in our own tongue. Hence acquaintance with the best English writers should be cultivated.

9 *Correct idiomatic English* Modern literature of the straightforward type should be introduced. Antiquated English should be avoided. Old literature often contains obsolete words and

out of date turns of expression and should therefore be excluded. At any rate it should be reserved for the college studies. Modern literature with its modern style represents modern England and as such lays claim to selection. English idioms and English ideas should be associated with English background. Passages with more of the local touch or colour and hence difficult of appreciation by Indian pupils should, however, be avoided. *10 Should contain all the essential language forms and all the vocabulary needed for a particular stage.* What language forms would be introduced and the size of the vocabulary should be predetermined. *11 Should include all the literary forms.* The text should be as widely representative of literary forms as possible, viz., stories, descriptions, biographies, accounts of travel, dialogues, letters, poems, essays, critical and otherwise, etc. *12 No retold versions.* Retelling takes away much of the charm of the original. A retold version is at best a substitute and a poor substitute at that. *13 No abridgements.* Abridging means mutilating the original. It is done at the expense of continuity. *14 Selections or continuous readers?* Selections secure variety. Pupils do not like long continuous narratives or stories. The end is so far off that interest in the middle begins to flag. Long narratives are suitable for rapid reading only and not for intensive study. *15 Minor details.* (a) The text should be profusely illustrated, at least in the lower standard. (b) The type used should be bold and the spacing between the lines sufficiently wide. (c) The paper should be good and should not be of the glazed variety as it is likely to occasion eyestrain. For the same reason it should be slightly tinted, cream, for example. The cream tinted 'antique' variety, a modern product, is eminently suitable. (d) The book as a whole should be beautifully got up, one that is likely to be an object of joy and pride to its youthful owner.

Defects of Present Readers:—

Many of the requisites of good readers mentioned above are conspicuous by their absence in the present Readers. The market at present is gutted with Readers, both useful and useless. The defects of the present Readers are:

1. *Uninteresting subject matter.* There are too many new words. The interest of the children is sacrificed for grammatical purposes or for the introduction of too many new words. Hence the children do not enjoy the subject matter.
2. *Encyclopaedic.* They presume to give information on all possible subjects on earth. The compilers of these Readers appear to forget that the Readers are not the means by which to instil all manner of knowledge on all manner of topics, from biography to biology and from religion to relativity, into the suffering brains of the pupils. "Ram it in, ram it in, the boys' heads are hollow; Ram it in, ram it in, there's more to follow.", seems to be their motto.
3. No aids or hints are provided by the compilers for the introduction of the vocabulary. 'Other words', or 'meanings' are given, but they are valueless. Of late attempts have been made to supply assimilation exercises at the end of the book. But these seem to be an afterthought, are often stereotyped and extremely dull. If questions are included they are random shots at the text and admit of no sequence. One still looks in vain for properly thought out objectives and questions for detailed study. There are no suggestions for the intelligent application of knowledge acquired.

The fact is that our requirements are too many, too complicated, too specialized. Practical, progressive teachers are too busy to write textbooks. Some progressive teachers do write them after their retirement, but by that time their methods have become obsolete. Hence it is that we find in this field unemployed lawyers, tutors or less successful teachers, or those with unusually good connections and

influence in the proper quarters. Even a third-rate publication with a powerful financial backing and persistent publicity can be pushed far. What is required is a well-organized and properly constituted textbook committee, a body of research workers, of practical progressive teachers associated with the Training Colleges. A good textbook should be the final outcome of the labours and deliberations of such a body. Till such a body is constituted and till it produces an ideal textbook, we must, I expect, suffer these mushroom publications whose other name is exploitation.

Finally a word about Readers prepared for use by English children. Can we adopt these readers for use in India? No, for they are not suited to Indian conditions. The English boy or girl has abundant opportunities of hearing and speaking English. Consequently he or she comes equipped with a large stock of English idioms and words learnt at home. He already knows the words or idioms in the textbook. An English boy of ten has from four thousand to six thousand words. His Indian brother of the same age has barely two or three hundred. Hence Readers suitable to English boys will be too difficult for Indian pupils who are just beginning to learn a foreign language. Thus the English boy and the Indian boy will always be separated by a marked linguistic gulf which will be discernible at every stage. Hence we must have Readers specially suited to Indian conditions, at any rate for the first five standards.

The contents of Readers arrangement according to the standards to which they are taught

1 For standards I, II and III. Stories of home life, accounts of common activities of English children. There should be no unconnected sentences or passages, but complete stories. Short descriptions, poems. Only the best of simple poems and many of them, should be included. Give child-

ren nothing but the best. The stories should be simple, full of rhythm, full of action, gradually developing, capable of dramatization and with some significance. These readers should contain plenty of pictures which serve for the introduction of the story and, later, discussion on it. There should also be aids and hints for teaching appended to every lesson. Exercises for the assimilation of the subject matter, words and language forms occurring in the lesson, should also be given.

2. *The middle stage, standards IV and V.*

A gradual transition to standard English literature. Dialogues, poems, stories, descriptions, little plays, etc. Pictures there may be but not very many of them. Exercises for wordstudy or for the fixation of grammatical forms will be a regular feature. Compositions based on the reading material should be suggested.

3. *The higher stage, standards VI and VII.*

Selections from standard English literature. The pupils are initiated into the different literary forms. Modern literature wherever possible should be drawn upon. It does not however mean that Shakespeare or other classical writers are not to be touched at all. By all means we will have them, but we will not make our textbook a mere selection from Shakespeare or Milton. There will be short stories written by the very best of modern writers, plays, modern essays (by Lynd, Lucas, Milne, Bolloc, Gardiner, etc.) of all types, descriptions of travels, of processes etc. Lyrics and reflective poems will find a place here. The best of letters may also be included.

The Treatment of Readers.

How is the teacher going to make use of the Readers for the teaching of English? How should they be taught? For this please refer to Chapter XII, 'The Teaching of Prose.'

CHAPTER XI

RAPID READERS

Aim 1 The Linguistic Aim As we have the regular readers for intensive study we must also have readers for extensive reading. The Direct Method makes no provision for extensive reading. No doubt the Direct Method is the natural method of learning a language. But it also demands that the learner will have practically unlimited opportunities of hearing and speaking it. A child learning its mother tongue has them and hence can make rapid progress in learning it. In the bilingual process where a child has to learn another language under classroom and hence artificial conditions where the time allotted to the teaching of the language must of necessity be limited, the natural method must be augmented by other means. By talking with the pupils, and in the detailed study of readers, we introduce new words to them and thus enable them to acquire a vocabulary which gradually grows to sizable dimensions. The time at our disposal being limited we cannot give them sufficient practice in the use of the vocabulary which they are acquiring and to which they are constantly adding. Without a constant reference to the new words that are introduced from day to day, these will inevitably be forgotten in a few days and will be nonexistent to the pupils. This is where extensive reading comes in. The scope for constant practice is found in extensive reading. The pupils come across, while reading extensively, the words they have learnt perhaps yesterday, perhaps a month back, memories are revived, old 'friends' are recognized and passed on, 'acquaintances' transformed into permanent associates and 'strangers' cordially greeted. The words used in different situations get deeply rooted into their minds. They become their own, permanent property, to be used as and when they

like. 2. *The Intellectual Aim or the Acquisition of ideas.* Extensive readers are the extensive fields wherein pupils may browse, each according to his own fancy, and garner ideas. Pupils must go on acquiring ideas. Without ideas no free composition is possible. Side by side with the growth in the vocabulary there must be a corresponding development of ideas. Language and thought are interdependent. No diction howsoever brilliant can mask the underlying poverty of ideas. The Greek word 'Logos' meant both thought and word. Conversely thoughts cannot be developed without a development of language. "Thought is not happy working in the void." 3. *Cultural Aim.* We must create a habit for reading. Some one has said that culture is synonymous with extensive reading. Books are the keys that open up the treasury of knowledge to us. This extensive reading must be done by oneself. It is for this that we want to develop the reading habit. We want the children to read after they have left school. The reading should be of a manner as to extract meaning out of the books they read. They should take the heart out of the book by reading it meaningfully. In short we want the present children to be intelligent selfreliant readers of the future. 4. *Appreciative Aim or Aesthetic satisfaction.* It is only by reading wide that the finer points of style are appreciated. A comparative study of styles is no doubt a more mature intellectual exercise and must await an exhaustive reading. Hence the earlier the beginning the better. We thus lead them to appreciate and distinguish between the rhetorical devices of the various masters of the craft.

In India extensive reading has suffered through neglect. Pupils are afforded very little opportunities of extra reading. The greatest concern of the Indian boy or girl is his text book, and that too in many instances is not intensively studied. The result is that the standard of English with the

Indian boys and girls has steadily deteriorated. And the fault is laid at the door of the Direct Method based though it is on sound psychological principles. The truth is that the Direct Method owing to the special circumstances in which it has to be employed in India must be augmented to accelerate the language learning business. Hence extra reading should be encouraged as much as possible. The beginning may be made in the mother tongue. If a love and a taste for reading books in the mother tongue are developed, their carryover to the reading of English books can be equally profitably effected.

To sum up, Rapid readers are aimed to enable pupils to come across and assimilate words and idioms they learn, to gather and add to their treasury of ideas without which no free composition worth the name is possible, to become intelligent self-reliant readers which is the only way in which they will continue their study and acquire culture, to appreciate the styles of the great masters of the art of writing and, to secure all these aims, to acquire the essential reading habit.

Requisites of good Extensive Readers

These resolve into two factors, the subject matter and the manner of expression. *I. The subject matter.* (1) *Interest.* The subject matter should be such as would appeal to the interests of the pupils at the various stages of their development. We have noted in the preceding chapter the directions in which their interests lie. The books that are usually prescribed are not suitable for the simple reason that they do not minister to the pupils' interest. The boys are not to be blamed if they leave such books alone. What they like are the penny-dreadfuls and the shilling shockers. It was said that such poor stuff corrupted their minds. This theory is now exploded. Their attraction is due

feels no urge to continue with the story. The charm of a good story lies in a great measure in the feeling of expectancy, the feeling of surprise at the unexpected, the gradual unfolding of the plot, the working up to a denouement. It is these that lure a child to the end of a book. Perhaps many of us can recall memories of childhood when, once in possession of a book after our own heart, we burnt midnight oil and went on reading till the small hours of the morning until it was completed. We take away all motivation when we provide stories with whose subjects they are familiar. Hence it is desirable that we give them books written about the life of people in foreign lands. Interests are thereby widened, and outlooks broadened. We should try to bring our children in contact with foreign people and help them to appreciate their ways and manners and outlook on life. This cultural aspect of foreign language learnings should ever be with us.

(d) *Original works or abridged versions:* A difficult question indeed. If the original works are drastically summarised or abridged to suit the requirements of pupils, they are bound to lose in this process of simplification much of their charm. A novel or for that matter any work in its original form is an organic whole, each plot or subplot contributing its quota to the development and climax of the main theme. This fine balance, aimed at and laboriously achieved by the author, cannot but be disturbed by any attempt at literary surgery however skilfully carried out. Characterization is unimpaired and the different incidents gain or lose in the weightage originally intended for them by the author. But perhaps abridged versions are a necessary evil. In all mercy we cannot expect the pupils to go through four hundred or five hundred pages of print. The difficulty can be got over by entrusting the work of abridgement to capable persons with literary tastes. Care should be taken to see that the abridged version is not a mere paraphrase of the

original and that the original spirit of the work is not killed. The language and style of the original should, as far as possible, be retained. Subplots, long descriptions that do not materially contribute to the development of the main theme may be deleted. (c) *Continuous or extracts?* Shall the subject matter be continuous as in a novel or shall there be extracts from various works by various authors? If the book intended for rapid reading is made up of extracts it will only be another 'regular' reader which the pupil has for intensive reading. The idea is that the pupil should not look upon the rapid reader as something which he is compelled to read and study. He should be drawn instinctively to it and read it spontaneously without any gording on the part of the teacher. It is truly here that 'the duty of the teacher is not how to teach but how not to teach'. If the extracts are from stories or novels, they will not satisfy the pupils. If they are of a didactic nature, they will not interest him. So the subject matter should, as far as possible, be a continuous one. If this is not possible it should be in complete self-contained units. After all this is extensive reading and if you feel that the pupil should read from, say, five authors, extracts from whose books you propose for the rapid reader, why not put before him the five books and ask him to run through them?

2. *Manner of expression* By intensive reading we mean a detailed study, a careful and minute scrutiny of a selected passage in the reader. Our aim there is quality and not quantity. The passages there are carefully graded both in vocabulary and grammatical forms. Every word studied there must pass into the active vocabulary of the pupil. But the case with the extensive readers is different. Here there is as little detailed word study as possible. No attempt need be made at drilling particular words or phrases. In an ideal rapid reader there should be no new words at all,

or, if there must be any, they should be few and far between. Their meaning may be gathered by the pupils either from the dictionary or from the context. They are not for active use. He need not use them, it is enough that he understands them. The teacher should help him as little as possible. The primary aim of the nondetailed reader is to provide practice in the use of words and phrases and language forms which the pupil has learnt in the intensive reader. He may come across in the rapid reader 'friends', 'acquaintances' and 'strangers'. So an ideal rapid reader will be very easy, with no new words at all. This is not possible, nor is it always desirable. We cannot manufacture rapid readers, 'made to order'. There are bound to be new words. In practice the pupil may skip over the words that do not prevent him from understanding the narrative. Lastly, about the size of the rapid readers. Books that run into hundreds of pages discourage pupils and sap any desire there is of reading them. We must remember that we are dealing here with a foreign language and not with the mother tongue. In the latter a boy may easily devour a novel of three hundred or four hundred pages, but a foreign language stands on a different footing. A rapid reader intended for standards III, IV or V should not exceed 50 or 100 pages, and that for standards VI or VII, 100 pages. From the point of view of difficulty, the rapid reader for any particular standard should approximately be of the linguistic standard or difficulty of the intensive reader for the preceding standard.

So much about the subject matter and the manner of expression of good extensive readers.

The Treatment of Extensive Readers

It has been observed that even the nondetailed reader is taught in a detailed manner. This should be avoided. Pupils should be helped only if it is absolutely necessary.

information should not be made an occasion for an oration in the grand style on the man, his times, his works and his place in literature. Literary criticism or an appreciation of his book, which is to be read, would be premature at this stage and should never be attempted. Give the background of the story if it is a historical one. Thus with a book like, 'A Tale of Two Cities', the historical background,—the conditions in the eighteenth century France, the feudal conditions, the abject misery and squalor of the people, the extravagance and arrogance of the court and the nobility,—is necessary to form a proper perspective and will help considerably to understand and appreciate the various incidents in the story. If the book deals with a discovery or invention, the same procedure should be followed. After the introduction is made and interest in the book aroused, the pupils should be asked to read it. Before they do so certain before-questions should be given to them so as to guide them in their reading and make it purposeful. While reading the book the pupils will bear in mind these questions and try to formulate answers to them. When they have read the book some after-questions are set to test their achievement. It should however be borne in mind that both sorts of questions should never enter into the minute details of the book. Their purpose is to help the pupils to follow the broad outlines, the general drift of the story.

This should generally be the method to be employed as regards books that are recommended to the pupils for rapid reading at home or in the library. But it is also a practice with many schools to prescribe a book or two for rapid reading in the class. It is also a usual practice to teach such nondetailed text in a detailed manner. The Head Master should see to it that such a practice is forthwith stopped. The following procedure has been found to be eminently satisfactory.

How to conduct pupil reading in the class? : 1. Some information about the book, its author, its background etc., should be given by the teacher by way of introduction. 2. He should then determine at home the number of pages that would be read silently by the pupils during the period (usually from four to five). He should make a list of the difficult words and expressions occurring in the portion to be covered and note down their explanations in simple words. He should then frame suitable objectives (four or five) bearing on the text. 3. At the beginning of the period he should write on one side of the blackboard the difficult words and expressions with their explanation and on the other side the objectives. The pupils may then be asked to read silently a particular portion, bearing in mind the objectives provided. They should be informed that answers to the objectives will be expected of them when they have read the assigned portion. The object of writing the difficult words and their explanation on the blackboard is to obviate any necessity on the part of the pupils to refer to the teacher for their explanation. Uninterrupted silent reading is thus ensured. 4. During the last ten minutes the teacher invites answers to the objectives or an outline of what they have read from the pupils and is prepared to discuss any other question that may arise. There should be no going into details, no intensive word study. The number of words and their explanations written on the blackboard should be reduced to the barest minimum possible compatible with a general understanding of the matter read. An alternative is to give beforehand a list of such words to the pupils and ask them to refer to the dictionary at home for their explanation. Pupils, however, often conveniently 'forget' to do so. Hence their writing on the blackboard is suggested. Each successive period will begin with a few revision questions on the portion read at the previous period so as to gather the threads of the

The Library Period

We have not above that every class should have its own library in addition to a general library for the whole school. In the case of the latter the teacher is incapable of advising the pupils in selecting material from a store too vast for him to go through. If the class library is stocked with only such books as are suitable for that class and if the pupils are allowed to browse freely into them they can easily pick up what they want or like. The number of books being limited, the teacher also can go through most of them and be in a position to advise his pupils in the selection of material and also to see how far they have benefited by their reading. A separate period has to be set apart for this purpose, known as the library period, and a separate register has to be maintained. The titles of the books read by pupils will be entered against their names.

The books should be of varying degrees of difficulty suitable to pupils in different stages of proficiency. Too difficult a book is likely to discourage a pupil so much as to create in him a distaste for reading. Many publishers now grade their books according to the degree of difficulty as suitable for standard III, standard IV, and so on. The 'A L Bright Story Readers' published by Arnolds are an example. Such books as far as possible, should be attractive in appearance, well printed and well illustrated. A good class library should contain about a hundred books suitable to that class only. If a particular book is found to be a great favourite with the pupils and is much sought after, a number of copies of it may be put in the class library so that several pupils may read it at the same time. 'It is perhaps better to have in the class library five copies each of twelve really suitable books than sixty different books, many of which are really not suitable.' Some really good English newspapers and magazines should be placed in the

class-room during the library period, or in the general library. Illustrated papers such as *The Times of India Illustrated Weekly* or *The National Geographic Magazine* or *The Pictorial Education* or *The Popular Science* naturally attract pupils and, as such, should be provided. Cuttings from newspapers and pictures cut out from them should be displayed on notice boards in some prominent place for pupils to see. Much English is learnt incidentally from the casual perusal of newspapers and magazines.

In the case of the reader for intensive study the same book is read by all the pupils. In the library period each one reads a different book. This is a supervised mode of study. Of course you cannot expect during the library period the same close supervision and attention to individual pupils on the part of the teacher as in other periods, but that is only a question of degree and much depends upon the capacity and earnestness that he can import into his task.

CHAPTER XII

THE TEACHING OF PROSE

The purpose in teaching prose, the need for a reader.

Our aim in teaching English to our boys and girls is to enable them to understand English spoken by other persons, to speak English themselves, to read and understand what is written in English and to write English. Apart from this linguistic aim there is also the cultural aim. We want them to come into contact with English atmosphere, English ideals and English outlook on life, to appreciate England and English ways. The third aim, the literary aim, that of appreciating the beauties of the language, of requiring

and to some extent the poems, serve as vehicles for the e. The reader, therefore, solves to a great extent the problem of the teacher as regards the selection and arrangement of linguistic units. The mere conditional qualifications of many of the teachers makes the presence of the reader quite indispensable and it is appalling to consider what they might do if they have no reader to lean upon.

To sum up, our purpose in teaching prose, and this we cannot do unless we have good reader, is primarily to provide pupils with intensive practice in using actively the language forms they learn, to consolidate what they learn, to enlarge their knowledge of the language. Prose provides the basic material, the fabric of language, from which to choose, to absorb, to assimilate, to enlarge upon. The literary or appreciative aspect of language learning is of secondary importance so far as secondary education is concerned. It is rather the linguistic aim of teaching prose, of enriching the language forms, of adding to the linguistic capital, and of consolidating them that must be of prime consideration in secondary schools. Teachers of English prose in secondary schools must never lose sight of this aim. The acquisition of meters is a useful by-product and must always be of secondary importance. If the intensive study of readers does not fulfil this aim, it will have failed in the purpose for which it was intended.

Certain principles recommended

In our teaching of English we shall not use the Translation Grammar Method. The ability to translate a word does not indicate a complete mastery of the word. The translation process prohibits any direct fusion between experience and expression. Learning a language is to fuse the sound or written symbol directly to the object, concept or notion for which it stands. Translation process, again, means that the pupils

will not acquire speech ability. It will merely be an intellectual exercise. Speech is sacrificed to writing. A literal translation is impossible. Even synonyms exhibit several shades in meaning. We cannot but develop bilingual equations, but no verbal translation can ever hope to bring out the subtle shades in meaning. In its very nature translation aims at mere verbal accuracy and not at the correct apprehension, appreciation or understanding of the passage. We should be concerned not with the words but with the thought in the sentence. We know that the best way to learn a language is to speak the language. To speak any language, native or foreign, entirely by rule or linguistic equations is quite impossible. Correct speech is an art and only intensive oral practice can develop this capacity. The translation method does not call for this speech practice and in it the pupils are mostly occupied with finding out vernacular equivalents. How cannot think in English, they think in the mother tongue and translate it while speaking. This results in vernacularism, a malady general with most of our students. Translation method also militates against correct pronunciation. The basis of articulation in English is different to that in the vernacular, and confusion often results. Lack of provision for reading or speaking means no opportunity to acquire the correct pronunciation. Correct pronunciation and accents are as much a part of a language and its spirit as its verbal content.

This is purposely made an occasion to dwell once again on the evils of the Translation Method. Throughout his teaching of English prose or poetry the teacher will speak in English and require his pupils to do likewise. The text provides admirable opportunities for questioning and answering for lively discussions, for skimming the passage thus providing the all important, much needed practice in the active use of the foreign language. That is what it is in-

tened for. The writing of answers to questions and free compositions will ensure further practice.

Having thus far discussed the underlying principle of presenting prose for intensive study, and certain principles to be borne in mind in the teaching of it, we must now proceed to the method of teaching it.

A prose passage must, of necessity, differ in its treatment according to the standard to which it is to be taught. A procedure found satisfactory in the higher standards cannot be adopted in the case of the lower standards. Yet, broadly speaking, the following three stages in the treatment of a passage are applicable to all standards.

The three stages

I Preparation or Introduction

- (a) **Positive preparation** Reviving in the child's mind certain relevant ideas, attempting to link new knowledge to old, proceeding from what is known to the unknown. Thus a suitable introduction is necessary in the case of a new lesson, if an old one is to be continued. Revision questions on the portion done should be asked to gather again the threads of the story dropped on the previous occasion.
- (b) **Negative preparation** This consists in removing the obstacles that come in the way of the child's understanding. We must prepare the child to undertake the matter or else he will not be able to take part in the discussion on the matter. Historical, Biblical or mythological allusions, if any, must be explained prior to the study of the passage. Such allusions constitute an hindrance to a proper understanding of the passage and must be removed.

II. *Presentation :*

- (a) Broad, vague general understanding of the passage or story, at first. It is enough if the pupils at first grasp the general drift of the story or get an idea of the broad outline of the whole.
- (b) Then comes detailed study or more definite understanding.

III. *Application .*

What is understood is assimilated and made the permanent property of the child, a part of his personality. It is only when it is able to use the new knowledge acquired that the teacher can be said to have been successful in his work of teaching.

From this general line of treatment we go to the specific lines, those applicable in the lower standards, and those in the higher standards.

The Prose lesson in the lower standards

We have mostly stories or simple descriptions here. The following procedure should be adopted.

I. *Introduction*

Preparation should be both positive and negative. If it is a continuation lesson, revision questions on the portion already done should be asked. If a fresh lesson is to be begun, preparation should take the form of a preliminary talk and during that talk, the new words in the lesson are introduced in a connected way, on a topic which has some connection with the subject-matter of the lesson. This may be done with the help of a picture. Words should not, as far as possible,

be introduced in stray sentences in a disconnected way. Manufacture a connected story specially for the purpose to serve as a vehicle for the introduction of all the new words in the lesson. There was once a lesson in which there were certain very difficult words without explaining which the lesson could not have been conducted. So, in this case, a special picture composition lesson on that topic was taken and thus all the new words were introduced. Then the lesson proper was taken. This secures the interest and hence the attention of the children or else they will be at a loss to know why the teacher is giving them stray sentences with new words. The topic of the preliminary talk should be in some way connected with the prose lesson in hand. The sentences illustrating the use of new words should be written on the blackboard. Pupils take these down.

This preliminary word study removes all the obstacles in the way of understanding the story. If the words are not introduced previous to the telling or reading of the story, the pupils will not understand it and enjoy it. A story is a work of art and ought to take possession of the child. If it does not do so we fail in our purpose. The new words in it will certainly hinder the understanding of it and thus there will be an absence of interest.

II. *Presentation :*

- (a) *Telling the story.* After all the new words are introduced during the preliminary talk comes the telling of the story or the reading of it by the

teacher. The former is to be preferred as the children get the advantage of the teacher's voice. He should memorize the story, if it is not a long one, and tell it slowly with proper accents and intonation. If he thinks that the pupils have not understood it, he may tell it a second time.

- (b) *General thought-setting* The teacher should then get the broad outline or the synopsis of the story by means of certain questions to be asked by him. These questions should not be too many or too detailed. They should be broad, general questions and should be not more than four or five. The purpose of asking these broad, general questions is to ascertain whether the pupils have understood the story as a whole. These questions should not involve the use of difficult words.
- (c) *Detailed understanding* This takes the form of discussion and explanation by means of questions and answers. The teacher selects short, convenient units from the story, reads them and asks questions on them. Questions may be asked only on the difficult portion of a paragraph. They need not be asked on the whole of it.

III *Final Review or Recapitulation* The pupils now tell the story. Or, the story may be told in stages by different pupils. Then a pupil might be asked to tell the whole of it. Sometimes pupils might be asked to tell the story from different points of view, viz. to tell the story as any particular character in the story might tell it. This is a good exercise in the Direct and Indirect narration.

IV. Application (In lower standards)

- (a) Model reading by the teacher. This model reading by the teacher is essential in the lower standard. In standards I and II, simultaneous reading by the pupils after the teacher is necessary. The pupils mark the pauses and stresses and follow the teacher when he gives the model reading. They imitate the voice, the accents, the manner of the teacher.
- (b) After the model reading by the teacher (and simultaneous reading in standards I and II) comes individual reading. In a big class individual reading by every pupil becomes an impossibility. All that can be done is to ask certain good readers to read while the rest of the class attends to them.
- (c) *Seat-work*. After some of the good readers have read aloud the story, the teacher gives some seat-work to the whole class. All the pupils do this silently and independently. While the pupils are thus kept busy, the teacher calls pupils individually to a corner of the classroom and makes them read in his presence. Thus all the pupils are made to read. Before the teacher gives the seat-work, he gives clear instructions how to tackle it. The seat-work is a device to secure that all the pupils are made to read while at the same time others are not kept idle.
- (d) *Evaluation*. Ask the pupils to show how many of the exercises given as seat-work they have solved correctly. Marks should be awarded as they give them a sense of achievement. They afford them a chance for self-display.

DEVELOPMENT OF A PROSE LESSON (LOWER STANDARDS)

Lesson

Introduction

- (a) Introducing the new words in a connected way Writing the sentences on the blackboard
- (b) And revision questions if it is a continuation lesson

Presentation

Teacher's reading or telling of the story.

Questions and answers on the text to secure its interpretation and the use of the new words

Recapitulation

Telling the story by the pupils.

Application

To provide drill in the use of new words Exercises.

Teacher's model reading followed by pupils' reading

Assignment

Introduction

1

Presentation

2

Recap.

3

Application

4

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Different kinds of exercises :

1. Matching exercises. 2. Completion exercises. 3. Multiple choice exercises. 4. Substitution exercises. 5. Sequence exercises. The different thoughts or events in the story are arranged in wrong order and pupils have to rearrange them in proper order. 6. The pupils to tell the context of certain passages or quotations or dialogues from the story. 7. Discussion of certain sentences from the text. 8. Description, dialogue, letter, etc. based on the story. Writing down the story as the different characters in it would tell it.

Conduct of reading by the pupils.

Should pupils read before the new words are introduced or before the passage is understood? No. Never make a child read a thing it has not understood. Reading should follow understanding. If reading is indulged in before understanding it will not be impressive and there will be no proper modulation in the voice. Many words might be mispronounced. The child will have no confidence in himself while he is reading because he has not understood the thing properly. The reading will be unmeaningful to him. He will stumble and falter.

Make the pupils read for the class and not for the teacher. That gives a different colour to the reading lesson. Let not the teacher stand near the reader. Let him go back and from there guide him if necessary. The reader should face the class. The book should not serve as a screen between the reader and the teacher or the class. The book should be held at a distance of about eighteen inches. After the comments are made, let the same reader read again correctly and pronounce the words properly. It is only then that he goes back to his seat. While a pupil is reading he should not be disturbed by the teacher by way of correction, provided, of course, that no unpardonable blunders are committed. It is only when he has finished reading that

the teacher should interfere and offer corrections and suggestions. He should not poeence upon the nervous scholar while he is doing his best. A bad reader should not be allowed to read before the class.

Prove Lesson in the Higher Standards.

I. Preparation

Preliminary talk bearing on the subject matter. It should, however, be remembered that this preliminary talk should not be made an occasion to give out the subject matter itself. There are many teachers who, before they begin a new lesson, give out the whole substance of the lesson in their 'preliminary' talk and then say, "Now, boys, I have told you what we are going to study. Now let us begin it." What is there left to begin? Everything has been told beforehand. Hence the important principle to observe is that the preliminary talk should be of a nature which bears on the subject matter, just leading to it but not revealing it. The subject matter itself should be a closely guarded secret. The joy of discovery should be reserved for the pupils. Give nothing away of the subject itself.

Negative preparation is necessary even in the higher standards. The historical background, allusions, etc., should be explained previously. As regards preliminary word study we dispense with it in the higher standards. In the lower standards new words or phrases are explained before the lesson is taken up. In the higher standards the pupils understand the meaning of new words or idioms from the context and they are expected to develop this

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broad, general understanding of the passage. A detailed study is to follow later. Long, detailed objectives cause distraction. They should be so short that the pupils can easily understand and remember them without their being written on the blackboard. Personally, I prefer to give them orally rather than expose them on the blackboard. Writing them on the blackboard results in a certain amount of distraction and bears the appearance of being too mechanical.

Objectives pave the way to further discussion. Each objective should be such as would prove a stepping stone to further questioning. An objective should be framed in such a way that it contains the nascent seeds of further questions. Detailed questions during the discussion should appear to emanate from the objectives much like the offshoots of a tree branching off from the tree trunk. The discussion that follows silent reading with objectives is thus an elaboration of the objective. Like the two main railway lines which appear to spread fanwise in a station yard each objective should open a way to further discussion in detail. The discussion that is to follow should appear to evolve naturally from the objectives. We thus ensure a sort of continuity throughout the lesson. Very often there is a failure to understand and evaluate the fundamental purpose and nature of an objective. We find teachers including objectives in their lesson because 'it is so done', and then, after the answers to the objectives have been elicited, proceeding to ask questions that seem to have no earthly connection with the objectives. Even the pupils, in such

ways, do not fail to ease the abrupt turn in the lesson. They should rather feel that discussion in detail is like digging deeper into the objectives. (See the accompanying chart, 'The Development of a Lesson', Higher Standards, p. 1.)

After the silent reading by the pupils is over, answers to the objectives are elicited from them. A few extra, broad questions may be asked. The next stage is that of detailed study.

There are certain occasions or passages when a reading by the teacher is advisable and may be preferred to the silent reading by the pupils. For example, in conversational passages, humorous pieces, scenes from a play, an oration, etc., the teacher should read aloud and give them the benefit of his reading with the correct accents and intonations.

(b) *Detailed study*

Divide a paragraph, if it is an unwieldy one, into simpler units. Try to discuss the point of the author, elaborate on it. Discuss the 'how, why, when and where' of it. This thorough discussion, thus skimming of the passage ensures, besides the understanding of the matter, a thorough practice in an active use of the new language that is being learnt. This is our primary aim in teaching English prose in secondary schools. This discussion will be carried on with the active cooperation of the pupils. The teacher merely suggests, the pupils catch on the suggestions and offer their own contribution to the discussion. In this process of questions and answers, it will be the pupils who will play a more prominent part

Sometimes an abstract idea will demand an explanation by the teacher. In such cases plenty of concrete examples should be given so as to render the situation as vivid as possible.

Explanation is not just paraphrasing. Explanation of a passage is discussion on it in which the pupils take part.

The difficult words in the passage, if any, should be explained in their context while this discussion is going on.

Before proceeding from one paragraph to another or from one unit to another, a quick review of the paragraph or unit, just read, should be taken by means of one or two questions. This helps to preserve a link between the succeeding units or paragraphs. A paragraph, represents, more or less, a unit of thought. Abrupt transition from the one to the other is rather jarring and gives an impression of disconnectedness. A rapid review of the preceding unit or paragraph at each succeeding step goes a long way to preserve a link between the different units or paragraphs, besides helping to create in the pupil's mind a sort of confidence regarding their progress or achievement in following the text.

III. *Final Review or Recapitulation:*

During the last five or ten minutes what has been read or discussed is elicited from the pupils by means of questions. This has the effect of fixing the new knowledge acquired in the pupils' minds. Some definite impressions are left behind. This survey condenses the discussion, which has just preceded, into a convenient form which is then remembered. The pupils, too, feel a sense of

mastery over the ground covered. Otherwise, only blurred, vague impressions of what has been learnt or discussed would be left behind, soon to be obliterated.

After a prose piece has been completed, perhaps in stages, a special review or revision lesson may be taken. This is especially helpful if the prose extract for study happens to be an inordinately long one. Its study, perhaps, had extended over a week. Such a review lesson helps to revive memories and impressions, leads to a better and firmer grasp of the details and promotes fixation. In this review lesson a summary or a precis of the whole extract may be asked of the pupils. A summary is a process of analysis and a precis is a process of synthesis. There should be both. Some composition work based on the topic in hand may also be attempted. Pupils should be encouraged to note down in their notebooks words, phrases, idioms and other expressions worth remembering.

We thus go over a passage in different ways. There is the study for thought, for composition, and for writing down certain things that we have learnt. And the most important of them all, the prose passage affords us opportunities for speech practice. Finally, the whole extract should be read orally by the pupils. It has been found that many of the boys are unable to read properly. This is because they have no practice in reading. Hence every extract should be read after it has been studied. The teacher may give a model reading.

IV Application

During the study of a passage or passages, the pupil acquires certain ideas relevant to the subject matter. They learn certain words, idioms and expressions. They use these ideas and words in their discussion on the topic. They are thus on their way to a consolidation of these. We want to make sure that these ideas or words or idioms or linguistic forms are thoroughly mastered, made their permanent property by the pupil, ready to be used if and when a situation or occasion calls for their use arises. We provide them with just such occasions or situations, that they might make use of the new knowledge acquired. We set composition exercises based on the topic or on parallel topics with a slight variation. We set questions on the text, we ask for a meaning or a phrase, we call for a word truly etc. All this involves the active use by the pupils of the new ideas, words, and idioms learnt by them. The extent of their ability to do so is the extent to which the teacher has been successful in his task. 'There is a decided advantage in providing for a definite application of the results of the thinking which the pupils have done as soon as possible and in as many different ways as feasible. It makes the truth clearer and helps to fix it in mind. The satisfaction which comes when one feels his power over situations as a result of thinking is the very best power stimulus to further intellectual activity.' There is an exhilarating sense of achievement, of mastery that is generative of confidence in one's own ability.

DEVELOPMENT OF A LESSON (HIGHER STANDARDS)

PREPARATION | PRESENTATION

1 . 2 3 4 5

RECAPITULATION | APPLICATION | ASSESSMENT

LESSON

INTRODUCTION

READING (SILENT OR ORAL)

OBJECTIVE

OBJECTIVE

OBJECTIVE

DISCUSSION

RECAPITULATION

APPLICATION

ASSIGNMENT

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Minutes in Lesson

The Assignment method of teaching the text.

Certain teachers adopt the following procedure. The teacher divides the extract or passages to be learnt into a certain number of units. A unit or perhaps two units are scheduled for discussion each day. The meanings of the difficult words are provided by the teacher or he asks the pupils to refer to the dictionary for them. He gives them instructions or directions to find them. He then gives hints to the pupils to come prepared for discussion in the class. Questions of a very broad type are provided to enable them to prepare themselves for the discussion. The teacher thus gives in assignment each day,—of looking up the words in the dictionary and gathering certain preliminary information on the unit to be studied the next day so as to equip themselves for discussion thereupon. When the pupils come prepared the next day, discussion in the class proceeds apace.

This assignment method, in a way, has much to recommend it. It opens out possibilities for selfactivity, in the best traditions of the Dalton Plan, on the part of the pupils. They become self-reliant workers. This method can only be followed in standards VI and VII.

An assignment should be clear and definite. It should contain clear instructions to the pupils regarding what exactly and how much of it they are required to do and how to do it. It should be such as would not involve the use of material or books what an average pupil is not likely to possess. If the teacher wants his pupil to refer at home to certain books to gather certain information, he should first assure himself that they possess them. An assignment should be manysided, one that would require a pupil in working through it, to use his dictionary, his notebook and his brains. Lastly it should not be too difficult, so difficult as to discourage any effort on the pupils part.

As a stimulus to independent effort the assignment method is to be recommended. The teacher gives just enough suggestions or directions for self-study. Too much information should not be supplied by the teacher or the supposed self-study will degenerate into mere spoonfeeding.

The 'Introduction' of new words or phrases

Purpose Learning a new language consists in the acquisition of new words and phrases, and the ability to use them. This process begins in the first lesson and where some words, nouns that stand for certain objects, pronouns, some essential connective tissues of language like, 'and', 'who', 'when', 'where', 'why', 'how', 'whom', 'whose', 'but', etc, and some verbs are introduced from day to day. This process of building up a vocabulary is continued throughout the school course. The new words and expressions occurring in the readers must be introduced and must pass into their active use by the pupils. How are these new words to be introduced? There exists a good deal of confusion regarding the correct procedure, probably because the underlying principle has not been clearly grasped. This ignorance or hazy idea about the fundamental aim or purpose in introducing new words explains the haphazard, irresponsible procedure adopted by many teachers with fatal results.

We have seen that the Direct Method is the only natural method by which to learn a language, to learn to speak it by speaking it. The fusion between the linguistic symbol that stands for an object or idea and the object or idea must be direct and complete. The learner should secure a mastery over the words he learns, a mastery so complete that he spontaneously uses the words when an occasion or a situation calls for their use. He should get a complete idea of the various circumstances or situations in which the word or idiom is used, he should form a complete

mental picture of them. It is only then that he will confidently use it whenever he feels a need to do so. It is the teacher's task to present to him the different circumstances or situations involving the use of the word or expression by means of copious examples. When the learner hears the word used in a variety of situations, he associates them with the word and uses it whenever similar situations recur. The word is completely assimilated and has passed into his active vocabulary. This should be our aim, of helping the learners to master the new words by providing them with plenty of illustrative examples, so that they can make them their permanent property, a part of their personality. When they get this mastery, when they know how and in what situations they are used, they will certainly use them. Learning a language is not just understanding it, but an effective mastery of it. It is with this aim in view that the teacher should introduce the new words met with in readers. The aim in teaching readers is not that the pupils should merely understand the subject matter. Readers are not to be looked upon for their informative content. Our aim in teaching readers is a linguistic one, that the pupils should enrich their active vocabulary, should learn the new words so effectively that they themselves might be in a position to use them if and when called upon to do so. The discussion on the subject matter is, of course, carried on in English and its aim is not to acquire ideas but to provide opportunities for the use of new words by the pupils and thus ensure their fixation. If we wanted to provide them with ideas, if we had merely the classical or encyclopaedic aim, we might as well have supplied the information in the mother tongue. The subject matter in the readers is there for the acquisition of new words and their active use. It is important in that it provides a basis for a lively discussion or talk in English. The thought is important only for the language that carries

it. It is on this vehicle of thought, the fabric of language, that we must concentrate in secondary schools. Supplying the vernacular meaning will only result in enabling the pupil to understand the word passively, but it will not mean that he will have mastered it, that he will have visualized the situation calling for its use. Having understood its meaning for the time being, he will have finished with it and that would be the end of it. He will not know the exact circumstances or situations in which it should be used because these are not given to him. A word or a phrase in itself has no meaning unless it is used in a context. It symbolizes a thought, a special shade in meaning, a specific situation, perhaps it has numerous derivatives each expressive of perhaps several shades of meaning, perhaps it takes a particular preposition or perhaps it calls for a particular construction preceding it. Unless these contexts, these settings for the word, are thoroughly understood, and this cannot be done without concrete examples wherein the word is actually used, the isolated word or its vernacular equivalent has no meaning. It is only when the pupil hears it spoken in a context that he clearly visualises the situation and makes its meaning. The language learning process consists of two aspects, the receptive aspect and the expressive aspect, and is not complete unless the expressive aspect also comes into play. By supplying these bilingual equations we only help the passive, receptive aspect—and that too in the mother tongue—and effectively prohibit the expressive or active aspect from coming into play.

Some argue that even with an introduction of a word in the best traditions of the Direct Method there are always bound to be deep mental stirrings, that the foreign word must evolve an unconscious appearance in the mind of the vernacular idiom or equivalent, that there can be no fusion or direct

connection between experience and expression without the catalytic agency of the vernacular. This may be true in the beginning, but with practice association between word and object or idea will tend to become progressively direct, with corresponding gain in the ease and proficiency in its active use and the vernacular equivalent can be depended upon not to rise above or venture beyond the threshold of the unconscious.

To sum up, our aim in introducing new words is to enable pupils to make them their own property, not only to understand them passively but also to use them whenever they like. It is only thus that they will be enabled to add to their linguistic capital and secure an effective command over it. The way in which to secure this aim is to illustrate its use in as many contexts as possible, in as many examples as possible. A sentence is a unit of thought and it is only in a sentence that its fuller significance can be comprehended. The more the discussion on the text the better, for that means added opportunities for intensive practice. Talk, discuss in English to understand the subject matter. Do not understand it in the vernacular and then translate it into English. The latter procedure prevents direct association, kills all interest or motivation on the part of the pupils, curtails opportunities for talking in English, ensures only the understanding of the word or the passage and not an effective mastery of the new word or words and produces a crop of vernacularism. The new words will be understood but not possessed, information will be gathered but speech ability will not be increased. The pupils' vocabulary must thus remain static with little or no addition to it.

The other day a teacher put forward the following argument, "but will not the pupils be better prepared to discuss the subject matter, better equipped to answer questions if they have thoroughly understood the subject matter before-

land in vernacular? If they understand all the difficult words in vernacular, if they understand the thought, if all the difficulties are thus previously removed, the treatment of the lesson will be plain sailing." I told him that I agreed with him,—to a point. All the difficulties were to be removed, all the difficult words were to be explained,—but in *English*. The underlying thought was to be discussed and grasped by means of discussion in *English*. It is only thus that the pupils will acquire the new words actively, by intensive speech practice. If explained in the vernacular, the passage will hold no more interest for them and there will be very little speech practice. The tendency to vernacularism will be strengthened and the new words will never be properly understood and used.

Besides, as a living language very largely represents and interprets the culture, the life, the philosophy of a people, there are bound to be many words that cannot be reduced to their exact vernacular equivalents; in many cases they are so foreign or novel to us that there is no vernacular counterpart as the thing or idea they symbolize is nonexistent with us. In such cases there is no other alternative than to lead pupils, by means of illustrative examples, to a visualization of the thing. In such cases, vernacular equivalents or even verbal explanations in the same language are valueless. Those words, once understood in context, must be adopted in their entirety and used.

I have dwelt on this point at length purposely even at the possible risk of repetition and verbosity in an attempt to dispel any doubts, hesitancy, and hazy ideas on the subject. The wholesale adoption of the vernacular for a previous interpretation of the text to 'understand' it by those who advocate it, is, to be blunt, a frank admission on their part of their incompetence and lack of resourcefulness. Their arguments represent, at best, an attempt to elevate their

basic ignorance to the dignity of a 'method' or 'experiment', a kind of euphemistic camouflage, a verbal fogscreen designed to shield what is at bottom a deplorable failure to understand the basic principles of foreign language learning. In one who is uninitiated it is a blunder, and begs for condonation, in one who is in a responsible position and is looked up to by others for guidance, it is a crime. One does come across such persons. Their only pride is that they are different from others. They are so jealous of their magnificent independence that they are never so happy as when they are in a minority of one. Against such there is but one defence,—to agree and pass on. So long as you stoop to argue with their perverse folly, they will never be made to believe that eccentricity is not independence or that to differ is not always to be wise.

Therefore, concentrate on the linguistic aspect of teaching the text and wordstudy, use the text as a potential springboard of discussion, the acquisition of ideas being merely a useful byproduct. Explain words or idioms in context and get them drilled.

Below are given some of the methods of introducing or explaining new words.

1 *Method of Direct Illustration* We explain the new word by showing the concrete object. We explain a verb of action by gesture, by mimicry or by imitation. Prof Jespersen here makes a minor distinction between what is 'immediate perception' and what is 'mediate perception'. Showing the objects in their concrete form is 'immediate perception'. Children perceive the thing in its concrete form. Showing the picture or the diagram of a thing is mediate perception, because perception is indirect. Children do not perceive the objects directly, but through the intermediary of their representations.

This method of Direct Illustration is mostly helpful in the first standard where the beginning in learning the new language is made. All the new words to be introduced there should be done so by this method. The defects of this method are that it can only be adopted for explaining only a limited vocabulary. Words of an abstract nature like, 'virtue', 'justice', 'truth', 'falsehood', cannot be explained by illustration. So this method is mostly suitable in the beginning (say, the first three standards) where the vocabulary is mostly environmental. This does not mean that this method should not at all be used in the higher stages. There are certain situations even there which are best explained by direct illustrations, especially of the 'mediate perception' type. The advantages which this method offers are: (a) It conveys the meaning better than a longwinded explanation. (b) It arouses the attention of the pupils. The image is well stamped in their memory. (c) We avoid or exclude the use of the vernacular. Some argue that it is impossible to inhibit the vernacular altogether, that the vernacular equivalent automatically arises in the mind of the pupil whether you will it or not. At any rate, even if it does, we bury it below the threshold of the conscious experience.

This method, then, is used mostly in the beginning, especially in its 'immediate perception' aspect. In its other aspect, 'the mediate perception', it can be used in any standard.

When a new word has been introduced, either concretely or by means of a picture, the class pronounces it, at first simultaneously, then individually. The teacher then says the sentence illustrating the use of the word and the class repeats the sentence, first in unison, then singly. The teacher then writes the sentence on the blackboard and the class copies it down.

2 *Verbal explanation in the foreign language* This is mostly resorted to by inexperienced teachers, the novices, and is one of the most common of their defects. Some of the experienced teachers are also guilty of this practice. Mr. Champion ascribes this to laziness on their part rather than to their ignorance. They forget that a mere verbal explanation would, at best, serve to interpret the word and that the pupils will not be enabled to master it unless it is used in a context. They are too lazy to think of sentences illustrating its use. So they just explain it verbally and have done with it, not caring whether the pupils would be able to use it or not. The explanation given is sometimes more difficult than the word itself, viz, to dig = to excavate, to pacify = to appease, a 'crossroad' is a place where two roads cross each other, 'veracity' means truth, 'traffic' is a word to denote all the pedestrians or vehicles that come and go by road, or the transportation of passengers and goods by road, rail and steamship routes, 'the stars shine' means that they scintillate, 'grand' means magnificent, 'the sound was echoed' means that it reverberated, 'he withdrew the order' means that he countermanded the injunction, 'he lived all alone' means he lived in splendid isolation, and so on. The list can be multiplied indefinitely. If at all, this method may be used in the highest standard only, and there too, care should be taken to see that the explanation given is simple enough, the remedy should not be worse than the disease.

3 *Giving the definition of a word* Many teachers attempt it but seldom try to be accurate in what they say. They know what the new word means and try to define it in their own words rather than refer to a dictionary for a precise definition. The result is that the definitions they give are often long-winded and inaccurate. There is no objection to provide a dictionary meaning of a word in the higher standards (VI and VII) provided it is couched

in words familiar to the pupil and that it is accurate. Of the many alternative meanings which the dictionary provides, only the one that approximates the meaning of the word as used in that particular context, should be given.

4. *Giving of Synonyms* A teacher should tread this path lightly. English is not a synonymous language and it is not often that two words are expressive of exactly the same meaning or sense. To take an example, are 'vision' and 'dream', or 'curious' and 'anxious' exactly synonyms? Are they coextensive in use? Can they be indiscriminately interchanged in a sentence? The fact is that we can only rest content with an approximation to the meaning or the particular shade of meaning. The teacher should, if he must, provide such synonyms as can be freely interchanged in most contexts. A synonym which serves as such in a specific context only should be sparingly given. This method is suitable in standard VI and VII only.

5. *Giving of Antonyms or opposites.* This method is particularly helpful in the lower standards. A new word is easily understood if its 'enemy' word is already known and is referred to. Thus, pleasure > < pain, truth > < falsehood, black > < white, big > < small, tall > < short, sweet > < bitter, dry > < wet, hot > < cold, light > < darkness, beautiful > < ugly, long > < short, strong > < weak, honest > < dishonest, etc. can be easily remembered by the pupils. The presenting of contrast, of exclusion, of unlikeness makes the likeness more real. This power to evoke an antonym is a mental characteristic native to all human beings.

6. *Explaining other derivatives of the new word* By explaining the various derivatives of the new word, the teacher tries to bring home to the pupils its meaning. For example,--he was a revolutionary = he revolted against the government = he headed a revolution against the government. If the pupils know any one derivative, other derivatives are

easily understood. The teacher should point out what part of speech each derivative is. This method should be used only in the higher standards (VI and VII).

7 *Use of the Context* Sometimes the very context of the word or phrase may suggest its meaning. By carefully reading the passage the pupils are very often able to visualize the situation and can easily guess at the meaning. Adult reading is mostly of this nature. The teacher should encourage the pupils to arrive at the meaning by referring to the context and foster this very desirable habit. Most of the reading in adult life is carried on in this way, and hence the importance of early training. Naturally, only the pupils of standards VI and VII can be trusted to hazard a guess at the meaning on the strength of the context. This method is definitely not for the lower standards.

8 *Verbal explanation in the mother tongue* This is the easiest method, for the pupil understands the meaning of the word perfectly. But he merely understands the meaning of the word, he will not be able to use the word itself unless he hears it used in a variety of situations. There will be no fusion of thought and speech. (For the evils resulting from the giving of vernacular equivalents, see pp 9 to 11) There are some who suggest the use of the vernacular as a last resort. This is a dangerous loophole for the lazy teachers who will always try to justify their increasing use of the vernacular as being resorted to 'in the last extremity'. Hence the safest rule to follow is to exclude the use of the vernacular altogether. Unless we aim at the ideal of total inhibition of the vernacular we are not challenged to explore all the avenues to explain a word in English alone.

9 *The Apperceptive Method*. 'Apperception' is a term applied to the process by which mind adjusts a newly presented piece of knowledge to the already known mass of knowledge. We rely on this mental 'faculty' when we

endeavour to explain the unfamiliar in terms of that which is familiar. Thus, if we want to explain a word, we give a sentence or a situation expressive of the sense of the word, and then we immediately give a sentence containing the word. The pupils thus put two and two together and link the word with the sense or the situation in the preceding sentence. For example,—‘The river Cauveri takes its source. The river Cauveri rises.’ Put both these sentences before the pupils in rapid succession and they will automatically connect ‘rises’ with ‘takes its source’. To take another example,—‘Ram lived long, long ago. Rama lived in olden times.’ The pupils relate ‘in olden times’ to ‘long, long ago’, and its meaning is understood. This method is practicable in all the standards except, perhaps, the first standard. Its use by teachers is recommended.

10 Concrete examples The word is directly introduced in a concrete example. For example, if the word ‘wicked’ is to be introduced we cite examples of wicked persons,—‘Ravana was a wicked man, Kansa was a wicked king, Duryodhana was a wicked king, Kaikeyi was a wicked woman’, etc. This method is suitable to all the standards.

Whenever a new word has been introduced, put a testing question to the pupils to ascertain whether they have understood it. If they can use it, it is a test that they have understood it. Put such a question as would compel the pupils to use the word in answering it. If they are able to do so, the teacher is assured that the word has gone home and he then proceeds to introduce the next word.

The relative merits of the different methods With the exception of the vernacular method, all the other methods have been found acceptable. Their use varies with different standards as indicated above. The method of Direct Illustration

tion is the best, but cannot be followed after a certain stage, being subject to its own inherent limitations.

If the criterion for the success of any particular method is its value for the mere interpretation of any new word or phrase, the method of giving vernacular equivalents is superior to all the other methods outlined above. But the mere interpretation of the new word is not our aim. We want the new word to pass into the active vocabulary of the pupil. Hence that method ought to be used which is helpful not only to understand the word but also to recall it when its use is called for. This power to recall a word when a situation calling for its use arises depends upon the pupils' power of retention or memory. Memory is of two types, visual and auditory. Some remember a thing better if they see it than if they learn it. They respond to the visual appeal better. So they should be made to read. Others are partial to the auditory image. So these should be made to hear and speak as much as possible. In language learning the auditory memory plays the greatest part. So greater stress should be laid on the oral aspect in teaching the language. Let the pupils speak as much as possible. To sum up, the pupils' power to recall a word can be furthered by (a) making an appeal to as many senses as possible,—auditory, visual, etc., (b) presenting knowledge in an interesting way because only thus can it be remembered longer, (c) promoting the general knowledge of the pupils because this provides the numerous situations or ideas that call for the use of words learnt, (d) trying our utmost to establish a direct bond between experience and expression, making the pupils think in the foreign language, live in the foreign atmosphere, and (e) providing plenty of practice in the use of the new words learnt. (See below)

Practice 1: the use of new words

When 'introducing' a new word we just introduce it

and it will not be remembered unless pupils are thoroughly drilled in its use. Many teachers forget this practice side of the business of introducing a word. They seem to think that once the word is introduced they have seen the last of it and do not care whether the pupils remember it or not. Consequently many of the new words, although properly introduced, are remembered only for a while, and lapse into oblivion after a few days. Thus the surrender value of the knowledge acquired by the pupils during a year is far less than what the teachers might persuade themselves to expect. This is a great educational waste. The remedy lies in providing sufficient, intensive practice in the use of the vocabulary that grows from day to day. We want the pupils to be trained to associate the word with the idea so that it can be easily recalled. When we introduce a word, we provide the idea for which it stands. In the practice stage the process is reversed. We provide the idea or situation which recalls the word. This practice promotes a permanent fixation of the new words. Below are discussed some of the devices providing such a practice.

Before the new words are drilled in, the teacher should satisfy himself of the accuracy of the meanings he has provided. Otherwise, once the wrong explanations are drilled in, they are very difficult to dislodge. It is easier to learn than to unlearn. The teacher, therefore, should see that the pupils entertain the correct explanation of the words learnt. Very often the words are only imperfectly understood, thanks to careless or lazy teachers. Perhaps the pupils have mistaken notions about the words. The teacher, therefore, should disillusion their minds of such mistaken ideas. Pupils sometimes have a tendency to associate a word or a phrase with a particular idea and that alone, because the teacher used a particular example or referred to a particular situation in the course of his explanation. We must remove this tendency

by using the words in as many varied contexts as possible. Psychologists term this process 'Depolarization' i.e. removing the tendency to associate a word with a particular idea in a particular context only.

Secondly, certain idioms or peculiarities of usage in English, met with in study, must be pointed out to the pupils. Indian pupils very often lay too much stress on the grammatical rules with the result that absurd Indianisms creep in. Hence pupils should be warned of the danger of a literal translation of these in the vernacular.

Different devices to ensure drill in new words

Every device, to be successful, shall create such a situation or set such a specific problem as would require the pupil to use the new words. In olden days the only method was that of conversation between the teacher and the pupils. But the disparity between the knowledge of the two rendered the practice unconcentrated. Besides, the teacher himself is greatly handicapped in that he has to adjust his vocabulary to that of his pupils. Hence the teacher should be in the background. Let the pupils be active under his guidance. Any device adopted by the teacher to secure practice for the pupils in the use of new words must satisfy the following conditions—(a) The pupils must do all the talking or the greater part of it. (b) There must be scope for the use of the new words and phrases in contexts familiar to the pupils. (c) The device should be safeguarded against errors and be rendered as foolproof as possible. (d) It should avoid mere mechanical repetition of the words without the consciousness of their meaning and (e) It should be reasonably interesting.

Having considered the need for and the tremendous importance of practice in the use of new words and the conditions which all devices intended to ensure this practice

must satisfy, we may now turn to a consideration of the different kinds of devices usually adopted. (See also p. 25, 'Different kinds of exercises.')

1. *The Substitution Table.* It is a process in which any authentic or model sentence may be multiplied indefinitely by substituting for any one of its words or word groups others of the same grammar family and within certain limits. The teacher first satisfies himself that the meaning of the sentence has been made clear to the pupils and that they know how to pronounce it correctly. The sentence is then divided into convenient groups and substitutions are effected in all possible ways. For example, the sentence, 'I always do it,' may assume the following forms when the different words in it are substituted by others, 'you always do it', 'he always does it', 'I never do it', 'he never does it', 'I sometimes do it', 'I never eat it,' and so on, ad infinitum. When the substitution takes place in only one word it is called a 'simple substitution'. If it takes place in more than one it is called a 'compound substitution'. Palmer recommends substitution tables because herein, he says, the word order is realized without the aid of formal grammar and the pupils are helped to pick up the language. Dr. West, however, does not take kindly to substitution tables for, in his opinion, they mean a mere parrot-like repetition and afford no scope for the use of intelligence. So he suggests a conditional substitution table wherein the pupils are required to choose from among many the only one word or group of words that fits in properly. For example,

I shall	}	.get out of bed.
or		go to school.
I shall not		learn my lesson.
		fall ill.
		wash my face.
	}	break my neck.

Here, there is always a demand on the intelligence of

the pupils they learn the greatest number of useful sentences of general application. They learn a simple context for each one of these word groups. This method also serves as a simple scheme of analysis in which the function of the various parts of speech and the nature of the group words are clearly shown. There is an extensive choice of model sentences to be memorized. The tables serve as a useful vocabulary and phrase book. Useful though the method is, a word of warning will not be out of place. These substitution tables must not be worked silently but should be spoken aloud by the pupils. Working them out silently would be putting an over-reliance on the visual memory. There are many who respond to the auditory image. And, besides, language learning is a study of sounds. The auditory 'faculty' is most important in language study. This method is most helpful in the lower standards.

2 *The 'Questions and Answers' Method* Usually the teacher questions the pupils and the latter answer. But recent educationists say that it is better to divide the class into two batches and let them question each other. The teacher should foster a healthy spirit of emulation and rivalry by setting marks for the quality of the questions and answers. However we cannot entirely eliminate the teacher. He should suggest the topic for questioning possible questions arising out of it and the proper pronunciation. This inter-pupil questioning will be found to be an interesting variation from the usual pupil teacher conversation. This method can be tried in all the standards.

3 *Mismatching Exercises* In these the pupils have to pick out the right pairs. For example

Birds	{	bite
People	{	smell sweet
Flowers	{	sing
Flies	{	keep the rain out
Loofs	}	work

This method is commonly adopted in the lower standards.

4. *The 'Do and say' Method.* This is a favourite method with the Direct Methodists. It is useful only in the first, and possibly in the second standard. Orders or instructions are given either orally or exhibited on the blackboard or placards and the pupils obey them repeating orally what they do.

5. *Completion Exercises.* Certain words from the sentences are omitted and the pupils have to fill in the gaps with the missing words. Sometimes only a part of the sentence is given and the pupils have to complete the statement. This method is often overworked and tends to become mechanical, especially in the early stages where the vocabulary is limited. It is a great standby of many teachers, especially those whose reputation for resourcefulness was never very great. Useful in the lower standards, but, if used intelligently, is adaptable to higher standards also.

6. *Formal conversation between the pupils.* Its object is mainly to make the pupils acquire the correct intonation, the correct stress and the correct accentuation. Valuable speech practice is also secured.

7. *The use of synonyms.* A group of words is substituted by a single word. This is best done by teaching the pupils the use of prefixes and suffixes. For example,

He *did not* obey his father. (*disobeyed*).

He was *not* pleased with his servant. (*displeased*)

This method can be used even in the higher standards where questions of the type, 'substitute one word for the words printed in italics', are often set.

8. *Reviewing or giving the substance of the passage.* When an extract has been studied the pupils are asked to review it and give its substance. There is need for the teacher to be watchful here. While reviewing, a pupil is likely to give a very broad outline, bringing in only those

details that interest him and using only those words that are known to him. The teacher should insist on the pupils giving all the important details and on using those words or phrases occurring in the extract. The teacher's work here is to guide not the thought of the pupil but his expression.

Literary Appreciation, how far can it be attempted in secondary schools?

As has already been stated, the detailed study of a prose passage or extract is undertaken from three points of view, or has to pass through three stages, (a) the interpretation of the text, (b) the discussion of the subject matter itself when necessary, and (c) the use of the vocabulary acquired. Of these we can easily dispense with the second aim or stage, that of discussion of the subject matter. It is not our business to pronounce on the merits or demerits of the subject matter. We are interested in 'what is said, how much is said, where is it said, by whom is it said, to whom is it said', but not in 'why is it said', or 'how is it said'. It is not our business in secondary schools to challenge the ideas or arguments of the writer or his manner of expressing them. This is for the higher stage. Our object is only to explain the new words and phrases which occur in the text, whatever it happens to be. This linguistic aim must be our primary aim in secondary schools.

Some educationists opine that once a workable knowledge of the foreign language is acquired, the elements of literary appreciation should be sown in the higher standards. (V and VI) Thus, here, we will have a double aim of teaching English the linguistic aim and the literary aim. Champion, however, says that this double aim in the higher standards dwindles down in theory, to the original one the linguistic aim. Very often even the linguistic aim is not satisfactorily realized. The teaching in the primary stage is seldom found

to be on a successful basis. Pupils are not able to express themselves in correct, idiomatic English as witness the Reports of the University Board of Examiners. So, is it not advisable, he argues, that we leave the literary appreciation alone and concentrate on the linguistic side?

But granting that the pupils have received a good training in correct expression in the lower standards, what can be done to teach them literary appreciation? We can attempt the following things,—(a) We can impress upon them the fact that a good prose style is the result of constant effort and experiment even on the part of great writers. R. L. Stevenson admits that he 'plied the sedulous ope' to the great masters. A good style has to be cultivated. The pupils too can hope to acquire a good style by imitation and constant effort. Models of good, faultless prose should be placed before them and analysed. (b) A good style is always simple and direct. Intelligibility is another mark of a good style. Pupils should be led to appreciate the aptness of a word in a particular context, to cultivate that appreciation of fitness in word and phrase which is the hall-mark of good writing. The English language is not a synonymous language and every word or phrase set in its particular context has a force all its own. Hence pupils should be given plenty of practice in the selection of the apt words. This discriminating sense, of choosing between one word and another, is not very difficult of achievement and should be fostered from the very beginning. For example, we can lead pupils to differentiate between 'small' and 'little', 'alter' and 'change', 'courage' and 'bravery', 'invent' and 'discover', etc. (c) The style often gains force by the employment of idioms. An idiom, at times, is a grammatical irregularity but it imports an indefinable flavour to the writing. The pupils should

record all the idioms they come across in the model passages and use them whenever a context calls for their use. (d) The prose style, again, gains in vividness by the use of figures of speech. Simple figures of comparison and contrast like the Simile and the Metaphor, Alliteration, Onomatopoeia etc should be explained and their use in their writing invited. Of the two sentences, 'He fought like a lion on the battlefield', and 'He was a lion on the battlefield', the pupils will easily realise that the second sentence is more vivid. Various examples must be sought and analysed before the pupils. (e) Lead the pupils to appreciate and prefer simple, straightforward, persuasive prose to the bombastic variety, one that relies upon idle verbiage for effect. Prefer always the concrete word to the abstract, and the Anglo-Saxon to the Latin one. (f) When a good model has been set before the pupils and they have studied it, they may be asked to write something in the same vein. Only the very best writers in the class will produce really creditable imitations, but all will have gained some benefit by the close study of the model. It is only when the study of a good model is linked with composition, only when they realize the difference between their own effort and that of the master that the model can be said to have produced any desirable effect. Otherwise it will remain merely a display of unattainable excellence. (g) Some prose models may be of such beauty and distinction that it may be worth-while for the pupils to learn them by heart as Recitation. Needless to say, they should first be read aloud by the teacher in full.

If the pupils are initiated into the elements of a good style by means of plenty of illustrative material and model passages, they will, in course of time, come to appreciate them and, much like Stevenson, play the 'sedulous ape'

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING OF POETRY

For the last four or five years there has been a new movement afoot within the august portals of the Bombay University. Poetry is in danger of being put down in secondary schools. The Matriculation syllabus has been denuded of texts in English and with them of poetry. There is to be no 'Appreciation' question in the English question paper. Those responsible for the change must have learnt their poetry in tears. They must have formed a poetry complex due, perhaps, to the bad, unsympathetic, dry, dull way in which poetry was taught to them. Their teachers were probably not trained. The poems which they learnt perhaps did not contain poetry. Perhaps those poems contained only high-sounding words and metaphysical thought, only dry bones without the soul of poetry. A disgusting way of teaching poetry must have led to a disgust and distaste for poetry. However, we know better. We may not yet lose hope. We remain discontented revolutionaries. We know that poetry is one of the goods of life. Poetry and its appreciation is one of the means of inheriting from the past all that is best. Poetry is ennobling essence. Poetry can directly influence character. The building up of a worthwhile character is a matter of formation of right sentiments. Sentiments can only be woven around emotions which, on their part, cannot be aroused without poetry. The study of poetry is justifiable for the pleasant relaxation it affords, the enjoyable experience it provides, the illuminating glimpses it affords of man's richest heritage, and for the development of character.

The Nature of Poetry

What is poetry? What is the purpose served by a poem?

For, the answer to these questions will very largely determine the technique to be employed in its teaching. The purpose of teaching prose is to add to the stock of pupils' active vocabulary. What is the purpose of teaching poetry? To determine this it is necessary to consider the nature of poetry.

Various definitions of poetry are given. They are legion.

(1) Is all verse poetry? In popular parlance the term poetry refers to literary compositions in metrical form. But can *all* such compositions rightly and properly be described as poetry? May nursery rhymes—our friends of long ago, 'Little Jack Horner,' 'Old Mother Hubbard,' or 'The Song of Sixpence', and the rest, mnemonic verses like 'Solomon Grundy'—be so described? No. It is generally agreed that these, though undoubtedly metrical compositions are not poetry. From these we rightly withhold the name of poetry. What shall we call these then? Call them verse rhymes, what you please, only do not give them the sacred name of poetry. To have poetry we must have metrical form plus an element. To this element we must now pass.

One defines poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', while another says that poetry is 'musical speech'. Whatever else it might be, poetry is the expression of some emotional experience. There is something which a poet perceives. Having perceived it some emotions are stirred. These emotions are then expressed. Having perceived a thing the poet experiences in its presence a certain emotional excitement which is then given expression to. When the emotions are deeply stirred the poet or the experiencer begins to think and he gives some definite shape to his experience. They are so powerfully stirred that they clamour for expression. There is an urge to make his inner out. It is a creative urge that makes him put what he experiences, the tumult of emotions, into something beautiful, appropriate, tangible. A

poet cannot help expressing what he feels. The emotions surge on and overflow. The communicative instinct is always very strong in human beings. We want to tell others what we feel. This communicative instinct is another urge to the poet to express his feelings. All poetry, then, is the tangible expression of some emotional experience. The poet records therein the emotions he experienced. This experience is the poet's own experience. It is subjective. All the meanings (of anything to the poet) are individual. Meanings (of any thing) differ with different persons as attitudes of men towards anything differ. No two persons have exactly the same experience and none feel the associations of words in exactly the same way.

(2) How poetry differs from prose. The poet, through his poetry, communicates to us his own emotions. The primary object of poetry is not so much to communicate thought or ideas as to arouse emotions in the reader. Here we may note the essential qualities by virtue of which prose differs from poetry. The writer of prose appeals to the intellect, the poet appeals to the heart. Prose transmits thoughts, poetry transmits emotions. Prose relies on persuasion, poetry on impulse. Prose compels, poetry appeals. Prose, therefore of its very nature, is longer than verse. Persuasion is the cardinal virtue of prose. It endeavours to marshal argument after argument and tries to win you over. Whereas persuasion, the only true intellectual process, needs enquiry, patience and a control even of the noblest passion, poetry makes you feel and act and speak on the spur of the moment. The master of prose is not cold but he will not let any word or image inflame him. Unhesitating, unrelenting, he pursues his purpose, subduing all the riches of his mind to it, rejecting all the beauties that are not germane to it. But he has his reward, for he is trusted and convinces as those

who are at the mercy of their own impulses do not. In the best persuasive prose the writer so lards us, step by step, argument by argument that we do not stop to applaud him, nor do we stop to question him. He gives a pleasure all the greater for being hardly noticed. But persuasion, whether in narrative or argument, is a long process, insinuating, piling up proof, and prose, its medium, is therefore naturally long. In this respect poetry is the very antithesis of prose. Brevity is the soul of poetry. The poet compresses so much in so little. He does not endeavour to persuade you. He just expresses what he feels and there is the end of it. He is indifferent to the world. He neither advocates nor does he defend. He seeks not to justify nor to convince. If what he expresses appeals to you that is your own concern, if not, he is not interested.

Again, poetry differs from prose as regard diction. The use of metre in poetry compels inversions, condensations, special constructions not admissible in prose. The order of words is different from the order normal in prose. Very often the poet shows a preference for archaic words or forms of words. The poet, again, owing to the limitations imposed on him by metre, rhyme and the other requirements of musical expression, is forced into a more fastidious choice of language than would be quite according to good taste in prose. Such special poetic words or special forms of familiar words have become the heritage of English poetry, though they are out of place in prose. They have, from the law of association or familiarity, a savour and an aroma and a suggestiveness not belonging to the corresponding prose words. Try to substitute 'The Ancient Mariner' by its prose equivalent, 'The Old Sailor', and note the result. Or, how does "Absent thee from felicity awhile" compare with 'Put off your happiness a little'? The poet calls a horse a charger or steed, writes ere for before, vale for

valley, while for for some time, unto for to, and so on. A good prose will be found to be sparing in its epithets where poetry is lavish. Sobriety is good taste in prose, it will avoid superfluous words and archaisms which poetry will welcome.

(3) Poetry and Science. A provocative question that may be mentioned here in passing is the relation between Poetry and Science. Are they mutually exclusive? Macaulay has said, 'As civilization advances, poetry declines.' Cardinal Newman pronounces the same judgment,—"Poetry is always the antagonist to Science. The two belong respectively to two modes of viewing things which are contradictory to each other. Reason investigates, analyses, numbers, weighs, measures, ascertains, locates." Mr Stephen J. Brown admirably expresses the two viewpoints of looking at the world, the Poet's and the Scientist's, thus,—“The poet sees things as they appear to the imagination and emotions. The Scientist sees things as they are mirrored by the intellect. The poetic spirit expresses even its loftiest thought in pictures and concrete images. The Scientific spirit expresses itself in abstract statement of which the mathematical formula is the extreme type. The poetic spirit is subjective, dealing with things as they relate to man and affect him. The Scientific spirit is objective, dealing with things as they are in themselves independently of man, it deals in facts. The poet aims at the achievement of beauty and the production of aesthetic pleasure. The Scientist aims at utility and the attainment of abstract truth.” The poet and the Scientist thus look at things from different points of view. Ask a gardener what flower it is we see yonder, and he answers ‘a lily’. The botanist calls it *Hexandria monogyna*. Spencer says it is the ‘lady’ of the garden. To Benson it is ‘the plant and flower of light’. So where science is matter-of-fact poetry does not stop there, it goes beyond and shows us the beauty

in all its mystery and splendour Leigh Hunt says, "Poetry begins where matter-of-fact science ceases, it begins to exhibit a further truth" And this poetry is better equipped to do For if science with its facts and reasoning is limited in its power of divining what is in nature it is still more limited in the power of expressing what it sees Lastly, science at best can observe, howsoever minutely, only Nature, it cannot fathom human mind, it cannot imagine. Poetry, of its very peculiar nature, does this.

(4) Poetry a power Poetry is a potent force that can sway the emotional feelings of people It is for this reason that Plato banishes all poets from his ideal Republic because they have this dangerous power of swaying peoples' minds and deterring them from their ideal path in quest of truth The music in poetry contributes much to this effect *Very many lyrics of Shakespeare are emotionally poor but* the reader is swayed by the mere music of the line He does not discern the lack of logic in the wealth of rhythm The rhythm lulls the reader into a benumbing sleep of passive receptivity of the feelings which the poet wants to convey The regularity of the rhythm is of the nature of hypnosis Savages work themselves up into mad, hysterical frenzy by the regular rhythmic beating of the drums.

(5) Children and poetry Some say that the appreciation of poetry is something beyond the power of children Indeed quite the reverse is the fact. There is much in common between the poet and the child Both live in a world of emotion and are creatures of imagination Both are dreamers. Both delight in picture and colour Both find a joy in the music of the words and in the subsidence of rhythm Both are makers. The creative instinct is as strong and abiding in the child as it is in the poet. The poet finds in his work the truest expression of himself The child also strives after the expression of himself and does it in the

same way as the poet by creative work. The poet is child-like; the child is poetic. Again, the child is naturally fitted to appreciate poetic inspiration. The school has received him comparatively unspoiled; his mind is buoyant, not yet clouded by expectations of death and decay. He has not yet had any appreciable commerce with the outside world, sophisticated, cold, calculating, mercenary, shackled by conventions. He has not as yet begun to wear the spectacles of habit or prejudice. He sees Nature in its freshest colours. He can, therefore, readily attune himself to the poet's mood. Indeed, it has been said, and truly, that poetry cannot be fully appreciated unless it is approached in the attitude of the child; the attitude of the child is the attitude of the poet because the poet is one who has never wholly grown out of childhood nor has ever ceased to look at life with childhood's eyes. It is because he has this spirit of childhood—its clear vision of things as they are, its wonderment, its frank acceptance of joy, its simple faith in goodness and love, with nothing of worldliness, nor disillusionment nor cynicism—that his poetry is able to deliver its true message to us. We must therefore approach poetry in the same spirit of childhood. The best of life, which is its poetic side, will escape unheeded from us if we allow this spirit of childhood to escape us. The true message of poetry is breathed only into the ears of a child. "Unless you become as one of these little ones, you shall not enter into the realm of poetry." If we adults must become children to enter the realm of poetry who can dare to say that to the child it is a forbidden land?

(6) What can poetry do for us? Let us consider a few things that we may hopefully look to gain from poetry. At first poetry does for us just what all the fine arts do, it ministers to our *delight*. Like everything of beauty, it is a joy for ever. It is a many-sided joy. The pleasure

that comes from poetry is not merely a pleasant tingling of the ears. In all poetry that is true poetry, emotion, imagination, ear, mind, all share in the pleasure, for all are appealed to by the beautiful. Secondly, poetry proffers *solace*. Some ill-success, some slight, some disappointment, some unaccountable moods of depression, some worry or overwork sometimes descend upon us, to oppress us and to weigh down our spirit. Like a passing cloud they spread darkness and dulness over a landscape which but a moment before was smiling. For such hurt spirits there is anodyne in poetry. It has the power to heal and relieve the human mind when agitated by care, passion or ambition. It is fitted for this purpose because it can lift us from this humdrum, imperfect world and bring us into an ideal world where everything is worked out on a perfect pattern. Poetry is an escape into the ideal from the pressure of this drab actuality that hems us in. Thirdly, poetry is an instrument of *revelation* to us. The poet is the interpreter of life. He dispenses to us something of the mystery of the world and of life which his clearer vision has been privileged to see and his more sensitive heart to feel. Mere use and familiarity blind us to the beauty in common things and in human nature. Our perceiving powers grow blunt and dulled and atrophied for want of use. In the strain and stress of life that surround him the average man, even if favoured with education or inclination, has little leisure, has 'no time to stand and stare.' He cannot indulge in 'grave idleness'. To him the poet comes as a revealer. Endowed with a more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, and a greater knowledge of human nature than are common among mankind he can see absent things as if they were present, and he reveals them to us who cannot see them. The poet then is, first, a seer and then, as Browning calls him, a 'maker-see'. The poet makes adventurous voyages to regions unknown to us or

only dimly known and brings us news of its discovery. Courteously, poetry *uplifts*. The message it gives us, "Look thou not down, but up." It makes a plea for the ideal element in life. Poetry bids us look down upon all that is sordid, fastidious, treacherous in life and invites us to lift up our heart to all that is noble and pure and ideal. The chief characteristic of poetry, according to the French poet Prudhomme, is an aspiration toward the ideal, however unattainable. Actions and thoughts of men uninspired by an ideal are not beautiful and therefore no fit subject for poetry, unless it be to serve as contrast. The poet is inspired by ideals and these find an echo in our heart. The poet cannot be a cynic without ceasing to be a poet. In making us thus 'look up', poetry uplifts us, ennobles us. All good poetry should be permeated with noble ideals. In this it becomes an elevating force.

Lastly, let us make a note of what poetry does *not* do for us. Poetry does not teach, it inspires. The poet is not a schoolmaster, but a prophet. This is in keeping with his whole theory—that poetry is for enjoyment, that its final test is that it communicates a mood. The matter of poetry is of quite secondary importance as compared with the *form*. Wordsworth wished to be 'considered a teacher of nothing.' Poetry is an art. Its primary aim is to impart aesthetic pleasure through its interpretation of the beautiful. Instruction, improvement, teaching are not the primary aim of poetry, nor does it presume to moralise. The moment a poet allows himself to be a preacher or a pedagogue he ceases to be an inspired singer. Mr Greening Lamborn expresses the same view—"To look for any teaching in poetry is to misunderstand its essential nature. Poetry has no message for our heads." Poetry has no special lesson, special teaching, special meaning, special interpretation to offer that can be expressed in any other form. De Quincey says, "poetry or any of the fine arts can teach only as

nature teaches, as forests teach, as the sea teaches, as infancy teaches, viz., by deep impulse, by mute suggestion. Their teaching is not direct or explicit, but lurking, implicit, masked in deep incarnations. To teach formally and professedly is to abandon the very differential character and principle of poetry."

(7) Possible reasons for a distaste for poetry. Certain people own to a lack of taste for poetry. On the exact nature of the causes that led to this distaste, why poetry could not raise its head above the arid soil of their mind, one can only speculate. Some possible reasons may be suggested. Perhaps poetry was one of those subjects that they learned to dislike because of the way they were taught to them at school. Perhaps the poetry lesson in their class meant so many lines that they were forced to stand and deliver,—that and no more. Or, they were 'crammed with notes on meanings and allusions and grammatical examples and biographical records' till they learned to curse the poets and all their works. Or, perhaps there was no poetry-loving mind to communicate to theirs something of its own enthusiasm. Or, they may have begun with the wrong poet. They tried to read Milton or Browning when they ought to have been reading Longfellow or Byron. Or, they may have tried the wrong kind of poetry. There is epic poetry such as the 'Iliad' or Paradise Lost, there is dramatic poetry such as Shakespeare's, there is love poetry such as Burns', there is narrative poetry such as Byron's or Coleridge's or Longfellow's, there is patriotic poetry like that of Davis and Campbell and Rupert Brooke, there is mystic poetry like that of W B Yeats, and finally there are the ballads such as those of the Scottish Bards. One cannot hope to appreciate equally all types of poetry. What is meat to one is poison to others. Or, perhaps they did not read poetry in the right mood. You cannot read poetry as you would read a para-

graph, you cannot race through a poem as in some light novel. Poetry will not yield its delight or its secrets to the casual, the hurried, or the flippant reader. Time spent in racing through a poem is merely squandered or ill-spent since it has contributed to kill the taste for what could be a high joy of life. Per, a poem, as we have seen, is the outcome of a mood. It needs to be taken into our minds in a mood such as that which gave it birth—that is, with our faculties of imagination aroused and, as it were, focussed. If one would gain from poetry what it can give, one must strive to read in the poetic mood, the tranquil mood which is the poet's own. And so it must be read in peace, with leisure and unhurried contemplation and a sort of reverence. Else it is lost on us. Or, perhaps they had expected from poetry something it is not prepared to give or gives but seldom. They may have gone seeking 'lessons' and a philosophy, and, not finding them, have lost interest through disappointment. Poetry may have sometimes a background of philosophy, but the true mission of poetry, as of all art, is to delight. It is a joy for ever. These might possibly be the sources of distaste for poetry. It is rarely that all, or indeed more than one, operate in the case of an individual. If he can resign himself to forgo that part of the delight of poetry that is not for him he can still enjoy what remains.

(3) How to cultivate a taste for poetry? The considerations that have been set forth above should bring conviction of the high worth of poetry. If so our next consideration is how to learn to love poetry, how to cultivate a taste for it. Nothing that is worth having is to be gained without effort, and it is so with a taste for poetry. The taste for good poetry needs cultivation, it is in fact acquired taste. Such taste is not a mere instinct, it is instinct trained. There are such things as principles of literary criticism. These laws and principles are for the guidance of our judgment in

discriminating what is good and bad or good and mediocre in a piece of literature. It is only to those who have grasped such principles and laws that the higher pleasures of literature are reserved. The first requisite, then, for the full appreciation of poetry is the training of our judgment and aesthetic sense in the principles of literary taste. These principles are conclusions drawn from the works of acknowledged masters, the outcome of gradually accumulated experience, the sifted judgment of generations of competent critics. Like a guide-book, these principles call our attention to the presence or absence of beauty or sublimity in a literary piece and point out to us the beauty-spots in it. These principles relate to and evaluate the elements or ingredients of poetry, such as—(a) the form of poetry which includes the musical aspect, the metre, alliteration and all the other appeals to the ear the word pictures the structure and the diction (b) the subject-matter and (c) the poetic spirit in the poem, its absence or presence in it. A knowledge of elements or ingredients of poetry and the standards by which they are to be evaluated will undoubtedly enable us to appreciate good poetry, to select what is good and to eschew what is not good enough. However it must not be forgotten that a rudimentary knowledge of the principles of literary criticism can only enhance the pleasure that comes of reading higher poetry. It is no substitute to emotional excitement. No study of the principles of criticism is quite sufficient. For the appeal of poetry is mainly to the emotions and the imagination. Unless emotion answers to emotion and the mind's eye can see the picture painted by the poet's fancy, poetry appeals in vain.

(9) Though strictly speaking we are not called upon to answer them here, there remain one or two questions which we must note down in passing. The first is the wider meaning of the term poetry. What is the poetry of life? What is its 'message'? We speak of poetry in marble,

poetry in colours. Again, how do poetry and religion stand mutually? Or, again, if poetry is an art, what relation does it bear to morality? There is the oft-debated claim that art is independent of morality, nay, superior to it, that morality is not the immediate concern of art as such, that the only relevant qualities with which to judge a work of art are artistic qualities, that when the artist has given the form of beauty to his work he has fulfilled his task. There is the opposite view that the artist cannot escape from ethics even within the domain of his art, nay his responsibility is all the heavier because he is an artist and "possesses the fearsome power of clothing moral evil in trappings of seductive beauty." Robert Bridges says, "Pure Ethics is man's moral beauty, and can no more be dissociated from Art than any other kind of beauty, and, being man's highest beauty, it has the very first claim to recognition. What is true of all art is true in a far fuller sense of poetry." Matthew Arnold had said long ago, "A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life, a poetry of indifference to moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life." It would be interesting and fruitful, did space permit, to examine these conflicting claims, to trace the interconnexions between poetry and religion, and poetry and Ethics, but we cannot allow ourselves to be led into deeper waters. The matter goes to the roots of philosophy, and here is not the place to discuss it, within the space of a paragraph.

The Appreciation of Poetry

Having considered the nature of poetry and the essential qualities by virtue of which it differs from Prose, we may now turn to its appreciation. We have seen that poetry is an expression in a tangible form of the emotions which the poet experienced. To appreciate poetry, therefore, we must place ourselves in the same emotional mood in which the poet was. It is only when we place ourselves in the

same mood that we can appreciate the emotions expressed by the poet. Good poetry should rouse in the reader the same feelings and emotions that stirred the heart of the poet. The poet employs several artifices to achieve this desired effect. There is the music of the poem—rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, onomatopoeia. It goes a long way to create in the reader the emotional correlates of the poet's own experience. The poet, again, adopts what is known as the 'symbolic' method. He uses words in a symbolic way. He compresses more meaning in fewer words. Poetry is brevity. The poet says little and suggests much. Every word or every expression is invested with a world of meaning. The poet follows the method of suggestion. He economizes language. To understand poetry fully is to understand the suggestions thrown out by the poet, to visualize their full implications and connotations.

But even enlisting the help of economy of words and suggestion, the poet finds that certain of his emotions cannot be adequately compressed or expressed. He, therefore, takes the help of analogies or comparisons. These are known as Figures of Speech. To these he is driven to express his thoughts adequately. At certain times he adopts still more comprehensive figures of speech such as allegory or sustained metaphor (for example, in the poems, 'Crossing the Bar', and 'O Captain, My Captain'). An allegory is a comparison driven to the extreme.)

Thus the experience or the emotional excitement of the poet is so subtle, its range and magnitude so transcendental, that it baffles all efforts at adequate expression. So the poet takes the help of such devices as music, the magic of words, comparisons, allegories, contrasts, etc., to express himself adequately.

With so much discussion on the fundamental nature of poetry it will be easier to answer the question, 'What is

Appreciation of poetry?'. Appreciation of poetry is trying to place ourselves in the mood of the poet and then feel with the poet, to try to be one with him, to get behind his mind, to penetrate his thought with the help of what he gives us, the music and magic of words. Appreciation of poetry is an emotional experience in which, with the aid of the music, we try to place ourselves in the situation in which the poet placed himself when he felt that experience. Appreciation is not sitting in judgment on the thought of the poet; nor is it merely the study of the beautiful lines in the poem; it is an experience in which we recreate what the poet once felt and created. The extent to which we have helped towards recreating what the poet created is the extent to which we have been successful in appreciating the poem.

There is something of a poet in each one of us. We are all poets to a degree. The difference between a poet and an ordinary man is one of degree only and not of kind. The poet's words, therefore, serve as stimulus to rouse those latent, dormant feelings that lie in us. He supplies us with sufficient stimulus to enable us to recreate his feelings. He supplies us with the windows through which to look and gaze at and admire the wisdom and the mysteries of Nature and the human heart. He is our friend, philosopher and guide. He brings home to us the tragedy and comedy of life, its humour and its pathos, its moments jewelled with vibrant, radiant joy as well as its tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death.

So if we want to make our pupils appreciate poetry let us make them recreators. The extent to which we have helped pupils towards recreating what the poet had felt and

created is the extent to which we have been successful in teaching poetry.

Method of Teaching Poetry

After accounting for the distaste for poetry in certain quarters, we discussed some of the good results of poetry and the nature of poetry. We saw that poetry is the expression of some emotional experience on the part of the poet. We saw how he experiences certain emotions which he cannot adequately express without the aid of music and figures of speech, how in order to appreciate the poem we must recreate the experience of the poet, try to become the poet while reading it. Our next concern will now be to consider some method of teaching poetry.

It is very difficult to say that this or that is the method of teaching poetry. It is not so mechanical that it can be resolved into so many compartments, as to lay down a cut and dry procedure. It all depends upon the nature of the poem and the nature of the teacher and the nature of the pupils. Certain poems are suited to certain standards. The same poem handled in the sixth standard cannot be handled in the same way in the lower standards.

Hence, no definite method can be laid down. But certain broad, general principles can be indicated. We can have certain steps but there can be no hard and fast rules to be followed.

Principles to be observed

1 The teacher should be successful in creating in the pupils the proper mood for understanding or appreciating the poem. For the poet the mood begets the poem, for his audience the poem begets the mood.

2 He should be successful in enabling the pupils to experience the emotions of the poet.

3. He should lead the pupils to recreate what the poet has to say. The poet's intention in writing his poem is that the same poetic experience shall be revived in the reader's mind. To read a poem is to recreate it with the same degree of intensity. The teacher's task is to help this act of revival. He should not give his pupils ready-made verbal pictures, but should help them to conjure them for themselves. Sometimes a teacher, out of honest motive, gives them a graphic picture and says, 'Look here, boys, see what the poet wants to say. This is what he means to say.' This is not appreciation; this is not recreation. Let the pupils do all the conjuring. They go home with a genuine joy when they feel that they have succeeded in appreciating a poem all by themselves.

4. The teacher must also be able to expand the suggestions thrown out by the poet. The poet compresses much in a short space and thus only suggests ideas without stating them. He makes suggestion by the music of the words or by a singularly happy choice of words. The teacher should expand these suggestions. Sometimes even a single word is so suggestive. The teacher should bring out all the implied and subsidiary meanings; he should discuss them.

5. The aptness of the words used by the poet. The teacher should lead his pupils to realize how the poet achieves the effect by the use of appropriate words. It is quite possible to convince the children that the poet has said what he has to say in the very best way possible. Let them find that any other way of saying the same thing falls far short of the original; that very often one must use a great many more words than the poet uses to express his meaning, without, however, achieving the same happy effect. If prose is words in the best order, poetry is best words in the best order. The teacher, therefore, should point out the beauty of expression, the music of the

words, the cleverness of the figures of speech, and the way in which the author suggests ideas without stating them.

6. Lastly, the pupils must be made to understand that rhythm is the soul of poetry. The moment the pupils perceive the rhythm of poetry, they get the power to appreciate poetry. The aural appeal is the greatest in poetry. So the teacher should be drawn to the charm of sound, the rhythmic rise and fall of the tempo, swift like the gallop of a horse in some cases, slow like the rolling of waves in others. A cultivated ear is an essential adjunct of the technique which enables the student to interpret poetry and appreciate it. Poetry is essentially an art of the ear and not of the eye. It can be enjoyed only if it is read aloud properly. In cold print a poem is lifeless and tasteless. The discovery of the art of printing has not been an unmixed blessing to the realm of poetry. The wandering minstrels of olden days were the fittest persons to carry about and hand down the beauties of poetry. For understanding prose silent reading must be practised, but for the appreciation of poetry loud reading is essential. While it is possible for the adult to hear the music of poetry in silent reading, it is hardly possible for children to hear with the eye. Fine poetry is a cry, an exultation, a rapture of the spirit and declares itself most fittingly through the human voice. It is, therefore essential that the teacher should have at least an elementary knowledge of prosody. Most of the teachers are ignorant of scansion. Even in colleges scansion is not attempted. A teacher can at least point out by proper syllabification where the stress is to be laid. He should read or recite the poem with proper gesticulations, modulation of voice and change of facial expression to suit the meanings in various contexts. He should train himself for the task and then train his pupils in loud reading. All poems should be read

aloud by the pupils. An important point to be remembered however, is that English poetry, unlike vernacular poetry, is not sung or recited in a sing-song or ding-dong fashion.

7 Appreciation can be the only aim of teaching poetry. The teacher of poetry is to teach appreciation, not explanation and paraphrase. With very many teachers paraphrase and explanation take the primary place and the poetry lesson degenerates into a paraphrase lesson. In the teaching of prose we aim to add to the pupils' vocabulary. In the teaching of poetry we are not concerned with word-study. Nor are we concerned with the thought in the poem. In poetry it is emotion and not reason that takes the initiative. The poet does not appeal to the intellect, he appeals to the heart. Poetry, therefore, should not be dealt with in the same way as a prose passage is. A prose passage enriches the pupils' vocabulary, poetry enriches their emotional experience. The teacher of poetry, therefore, should not concentrate in the least on word-study. He should identify himself with the sentiments of the poems and invite his pupils to do likewise. They will readily follow for there is nothing so infectious as emotion. The teacher, therefore, should not treat a poem as a prose piece, should not attempt to explain it word by word, or, by rendering it in its prose order should not merely paraphrase it, or otherwise deal with it in an irreverent way.

8 Preserve the unity of the poem. A poem should be taught as a unit by itself. It is a work of art and all art implies the following of some arrangement. So, as far as possible, do not break this order. The dissection of a poem takes away all its charm. Treat the poem as a whole. Do not take it line by line, piece by piece or stanza by stanza. Do not plod along in a wearisome manner from stanza to stanza. Even if the poem is a long one, go through the whole of it at the first reading. Go straight to the heart of

the poem the central idea in it, and proceed thence to the discussion. The order or sequence of the stanzas need not be observed. When the imagery is being built up during the discussion, bits may be gathered from any stanza or part of the poem. Thus, discussion might start from, say, the fourth or even the last stanza. Pupils should not gather the impression that a poem is a lifeless thing, to be cut up piecemeal.

The Teacher expectations from him

1. He must be able to appreciate the poem himself. He must make an honest effort to appreciate the poem fully before he handles it in the class. Even in the case of mystic poems every honest effort should be made to understand them. The appreciation of a poem by the teacher himself is the first expectation from him. Some suggest that poets alone should teach poetry. At least every teacher of poetry must necessarily be poetic to appreciate beauty himself.

2. He must acquire and cultivate the art of good reading. It is a thing which, if well done, can pass on a poem. It is only by good reading that we can create in the pupils the proper mood or attitude of appreciating a poem.

3. While helping his pupils to appreciate a poem, he should throw out such suggestions as would help them to discover much of the charm of a poem by themselves. These suggestions must not be too many. They should be mingled with legerism—the joy of discovery. Let the pupils find out for themselves. The teacher should not go beyond certain limits, he must not give out everything. For example, the 's' sound is expressive of silence. He should not tell them outright of this fact. Let him ask them why the 's' sound is used. Reserve the joy of discovery for the pupils. Let him make them explorers in quest of beauty. It is only when we give children opportunities to discover that appreciation can become a pleasant experience.

4. He should treat the poem as a whole. More often than not poems are cruelly treated. They are mercilessly cut up into countless pieces, analyzed to an extreme. Their beautiful skin is peeled off and the bare skeleton is presented in all its naked horror to the terrified audience. It has been well said that in driving poetry into the head teachers too often drive it out of the heart. And that is surely a disaster. Let him preserve the essential unity in the poem.

5. He should make his pupils keen observers. Keen and minute observers possess the capacity to appreciate any thing. They are often struck by the beauties of Nature. They find sermons in stones, books in running brooks, and good in everything. To them a thing of beauty is a joy for ever. Therefore, he should do his best to develop the powers of observation in the pupils. They must be shown good scenery, landscapes, good pictures, good plays, good architecture. They should be taken to places where Nature is at her best. Thus will desirable complexes be formed and sentiments woven round objects that are manifestations of beauty. Thus will experience be enriched. Thus will a frame of mind be engineered that will be receptive of the poet's suggestions.

Only a teacher whose mood is attuned to the mood of the poem, whose imagination is alive, whose curiosity is alert, who is a good reader, who understands what poetry is and who comprehends the full connotations of the words in the poem, can hope to revive in the pupil's mind the same poetic experience felt by the poet.

Having so far discussed certain general principles to be observed while teaching a poem, and the expectations from a teacher, we can now turn to the particular steps to be followed in its treatment. This treatment will, of course, differ according to the standard to which the poem is to be taught. The treatment of a poem in the lower standards

will be different from that in the higher standards. Below are given the steps to be followed in the higher standards. The necessary variation from these, required in the lower standards, will be discussed later on.

The Poetry Lesson in the Higher Standards

I. Introduction

- (a) Opinions differ as regards the nature and scope of introduction to a poem. In most cases no formal introduction as such is necessary except the bare mention of the title of the poem and the name of the poet. We go straight to the poem. Let the poem tell its own tale.

Some teachers follow what is called the 'biographical method' in which an account of the poet, his life and his works is given before the poem is taken up. This is entirely unnecessary as it can lead to distraction. It can only be permissible where a previous knowledge of certain events in the poet's life, certain circumstances of a personal nature that led to the writing of the poem and coloured it, is absolutely necessary for a correct perspective and understanding of a poem. Such specific incidents in the life of the poet should be pointed out. Thus, Milton's 'Ode on Blindness' will not be understood unless we know of his own personal affliction, and Stevenson's 'Requiem' will not be appreciated if we do not know of the romantic vicissitudes in the singularly unquiet life of that restless spirit. There are many poems in whose case it is important accurately to 'place' the author. What is his period? Amid what social surroundings, in the midst of what historical background was his life passed? The

knowledge of such facts throws for us a new light on the author's writings. The writer's mind must needs in some degree be moulded by his times. We must, in such cases, reconstruct for ourselves a bygone age in its ideas as well as its actions and we must appreciate how the poet was affected by them, and the standpoint from which he must view them. This previous knowledge of the environment of the poet, of the formative factors that helped evolve his genius, enables us, roughly speaking, to size up the character and mentality of the poet—his personality. Something of the writer himself, of his personality, we must know if we are fully to appreciate his work. We must get at the man behind the poem. Now this knowledge of the poet's personality is less needed or somewhat less helpful for the interpretation of some poets' work than it is for the work of others. Where it is needed it must be provided. This should be done before the poem proper is taken up. Even then the teacher should restrict himself to providing the essentials only, essentials that will shed light on the author's work, and not indulge in a long list of dates, events and irrelevant personal details in the poet's life. As a critic has somewhat trenchantly put it, "and the biography of a poet is no more necessary to an understanding or enjoyment of it than is a model or anatomy of some tropical tree to the right taste of the fruit we are familiar with on the market stall." To sum up, a biographical sketch of the poet, *some acquaintance* with him, is necessary in the case of certain poems. In such cases the necessary facts from the lives of the

poets must be supplied and will be justifiable introductions.

Again, there are certain poems which have for their themes certain historical incidents. Pupils do not know these historical associations. In such cases the historical background must be explained before they are taken up. 'The Burial of Sir John Moore', 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', 'Hohenlinden', 'Casabianca', 'The Incident at the French Camp', 'How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix', illustrate the point. The historical background is explained and the pupils are then invited to read a poem based on that particular incident.

If there are any Biblical allusions in the poem or the poem is based on a mythological or Biblical incident, the same should be explained beforehand. (e.g. 'The Destruction of Sennacherib', 'The Forsaken Merman').

Certain teachers follow what is called the 'Summary Method' in dealing with long, abstruse, didactic poems. How are longer poems like 'Mort d'Arthur', 'Enoch Arden', 'Sohrab and Rustum', 'The Prisoner of Chillon', 'The Deserted Village', 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', to be introduced, they ask. While introducing such poems they give the summary of the whole thing, give out the whole story, and then proceed to read it. This 'Summary Method' should not be followed as it takes away all interest in the reading of the poem. When the whole story has been told by the teacher, although in the form of a summary, the pupils have been left with nothing to discover and there is no

incentive for them to go on with the poem. Do not come in the way of the pupils appreciating the poem directly from the poet. Obviously, reading the whole poem in the first instance, at one sitting, can lead you nowhere. The pupils will be lost in the maze of details and will not be able to follow the thread in the narrative. It can only be wasteful. In such cases divide the poem into several units. You may decide into how many units and from what aspects the poem should be divided and which unit or aspect or topic should be dealt with in the beginning and in what way. Begin with a unit and proceed with each successive unit till you finish the poem. It is only when the whole poem has been studied that a summary of it may profitably be required of the pupils. In the case of such longer poems, it is always better to approach them directly without the need for any introduction or summary.

Besides the 'Biographical Method' and the 'Summary Method' of introducing a poem, there are two others which are particularly helpful in the lower standards only,—the 'Eliciting Method', and the 'Removal of Difficulties' Method. In the Eliciting Method the teacher either starts discussion on the topic of the poem and thus elicits all the ideas contained in the poem, or he draws a picture representing the topic and by means of discussion on the picture elicits the whole substance of the poem. He then tells the pupils, "Well, boys, you will find all we have discussed in this poem. Read it." He then reads the poem and carries on a formal conversation on the poem. Of course, the pupils knew everything because it has

been told to them by the teacher during the 'introduction'. Now this Eliciting Method is a necessary evil in the lower standards because the pupils' power of understanding has not yet been developed to such a degree as would enable them to understand the poem unaided. But even in this 'drawing out' method we need not present the pupils with everything ready-made. Even in the lower standards we want them to discover for themselves. Some background of the poem, some discussion on the scene in the poem may be provided, but it should not be more than is absolutely necessary for the understanding of the poem. If a picture has been drawn and the teacher desires to introduce the poem from it by a few questions upon it, he should be careful not to give out the poem while discussing on the picture. Have as much talk as is absolutely necessary for the purpose of introduction, but do not go further. Do not discuss during the introductory talk those things which should properly be discussed after reading the poem. This Eliciting Method, in its modified form as discussed above,—preliminary talk on the topic of the poem, or introducing it from a picture by means of a discussion on it—is only to be followed in the lower standards and not in the higher standards. And even in the lower standards the underlying purpose of this elaborate introduction from a picture and the discussion on it, is to explain certain difficult words that might materially come in the way of understanding the poem. We have seen how even in the case of prose preliminary word-study is necessary in the lower standards. Unless these obstacles in the way of understanding are removed, pupils will not be able to understand the

passage or poem and, consequently, will not enjoy it. Hence, all difficult words in the poem must first be explained. These difficult words can best be explained in their context from a picture illustrating the topic of the poem. Hence the necessity for a picture in the lower standards. Never introduce a poem from a picture in the higher standards. If the poem for discussion contains no difficult words or words of such difficulty that the pupils can divine their meaning readily, the usual preliminary word-study is dispensed with and a direct introduction is made.

Here a word about pictures as a medium of introducing a poem will not be out of place. Should the study of a poem begin with a picture? If the poet is a skillful one he invariably creates the right atmosphere in his poem and no extra pictures are necessary to supplement the poet's verbal picture. If at all, pictures are necessary in the lower standards only and that too for illustrating a word or a place. In no case should the talk on the picture include the subject-matter of the poem itself. We know that appreciation is a creative process. We want pupils to recreate by imagination. We want them to build up the image mentally. Presentation of ready-made pictures prevents this process of recreation. It gives no scope to their recreating powers. Pictures, therefore, are out of the question in the higher standards; in the lower standards they are a necessary evil. Even there their use is strictly limited to the explanation of a difficult word or situation and not explaining the poem itself. When the word has been explained, when the introduction has been made, -the purpose

which the picture was intended to serve, has been accomplished and it is removed. The poem is then discussed orally without any reference to the picture.

Lastly, about the 'Removal of Difficulties' Method. Should the study of a poem begin by the removing of all the difficulties by the teacher? The teacher sometimes does this so thoroughly that there is nothing left for the pupil to do. While the difficulties in the poem are discussed in contexts the whole poem is discussed. After such a thorough discussion of the subject-matter during the introduction, the actual presentation of the poem itself falls flat and comes rather like an anticlimax. Hence, during the introduction there should be no thorough discussion of the poem, no premature disclosure of the secret, of the treasure, of the beauty of the poem. Let the pupils find it out. Reserve it for them. Preliminary word-study is necessary only in the lower standards. There all the difficult words are explained beforehand during the introduction before the poem proper is taken up. In the higher standards, we have no preliminary word-study at all. All difficult words, if any, are explained in their context during the discussion on the poem in the 'Presentation' stage.

Above, we discussed the different ways or methods of introducing a poem,—the Direct Approach, the Biographical Method, the Summary Method, the Eliciting Method, and the Removal of Difficulties Method. Of these, the method of direct approach is the best and should always be adopted in the higher standards, and with modifications in the lower standards. The Biographical Method is useful in the case of certain poets and poems. The Summary

Method should be left alone. The Eliciting Method and the Removal of Difficulties Method are applicable in the lower standards only and must be limited to the explaining of new words only and not of the subject-matter of the poem itself. The place of a picture in the introduction of a poem has already been discussed.

Thus, only in a few cases are introductions necessary. If they are necessary let them be as brief as possible. They should reveal nothing of the poem itself. They should not take more than two or three minutes. Once the introduction is made the teacher should not stand between the pupils and the poem but should retire into the background.

Presentation.

- (a) Reading of the poem by the teacher. The entire poem—in the case of longer poems a passage or a unit complete in itself—ought to be read aloud, practically without comment. The teacher ought to read it such as to give their full value to its musical qualities and he ought to be capable of at least suggesting by the voice its emotional qualities. The poem ought not to be read as a piece of prose; the rhythm ought, without violence to the sense, to be clearly marked.
- (b) General thought-getting. This done, and while the poem *as a whole* is still fresh in the hearers' mind, its central theme or main idea—the soul of it, so to speak—might be suggested if possible by one of the listeners. In other words, the question 'what is it about?' should be answered as concisely as possible. For example, the theme of Scott's 'Lochinvar' might be set down thus:
 "Lochinvar, finding that his lady-love was to

be wedded to another man, succeeds in carrying her off from the bridal dance." Now such an answer may not easily suggest itself to the young listener. So the teacher may ask two or three questions on the whole poem, the answers to which questions would form the general thought, the central theme, in the poem. This general thought-getting is a very important factor in the understanding of the poem. Otherwise we may miss the unity of the poem, without which it is a mere succession of beautiful words and images and not a work of art.

In the language of pedagogy these general thought-getting questions are termed 'objectives' (For a discussion on 'objectives' and their nature see pp. 87-88.) After the answers to the objectives are elicited we proceed to a detailed study of the poem, to a detailed discussion on it.

- (c) After the main theme of the poem has been elicited, after the inevitable question 'what is it about?' has been answered, after the answers to the objectives, never more than two or three, have been invited, we proceed to the next stage, the understanding of the poem and a detailed discussion on it. This explanation of the poem, thus passing on of the poem to the pupils, is the most difficult part of teaching a poem and the teacher's success or failure in teaching it very largely depends upon his handling of this stage. Let us consider how best to proceed in this matter.

Our first endeavour must be to *understand* the whole of the poem, the literal meaning of it, so far as it is necessary for a full appreciation. Perhaps there are some unfamiliar words, some

obscure constructions. These must be explained. It is a practice with some teachers to detach such words beforehand and explain them that there might be no language barrier while the poem is actually being discussed. While allowing for the utility of this practice in the lower standards where the powers of understanding have not developed we cannot recommend it for the higher standards. The poet has used the words in a particular setting; they have particular associations. These associations more than the dictionary meaning are important and must be understood if the poem is really to be appreciated. If we explain the isolated words beforehand, torn from their settings, these associations must inevitably be lost. Hence the safest rule is to explain the words in their contexts as and when called for.

Another note of warning. When such explanations are given, only so much of them should be given as are quite essential for understanding the general significance of the poem. Further elaborate explanations are needless and a distraction. Do not use the poem as a gravel pit for the extraction of grammar, philology, mythology, or whatever other fragments of various sciences that the teacher thinks he can discover in it. There are teachers who must needs track every word to its lair in the etymological dictionary. Too often the poem is degraded to the position of a sort of quarry whence the sand and gravel of grammatical examples, the fossils of philology, may be drawn when needed. Too often it is considered at best a 'text', to be mastered for examination

purposes, to be dissected, it is put through the 'third degree' methods to extract answers to as many possible examiners' questions that may lurk in it. One cannot too strongly condemn such practice. We must eschew all needless erudition. To sum up, all teachers of poetry should bear in mind that the explanations they provide are not overelaborate. What we should aim at is that the pupils get a general 'awareness' of the words and their associations in the poem. When the words have been understood, when their associations have been grasped, the teacher should use them exclusively. Certain teachers try to use their own words. This is fatal to a real appreciation of the poem. The poet has used the best words to express in the best possible way what he has to say. To try to substitute other words for his words is sabotaging the poem. Hence use, as far as possible, the poet's own words.

When all needful explanations have been made and the general thought in the poem has been understood we must endeavour to enter into its *spirit*. Merely to understand the literal meaning of the poem is not enough. We must gain an imaginative insight into it, to feel the poem as the poet felt it while he wrote it. For this we must see what the poem itself can tell us about the circumstances and the mood. What were the circumstances that occasioned the poem and in what circumstances, real or imaginative, was it written? In 'Daffodils' Wordsworth saw them dancing on the shores of a lake, in Gray's 'Elegy' the poet is sitting at evening in the country

churchyard, while in 'The Deserted Village' Goldsmith, far away from the scene described, is calling up dim memories of long ago. The mood is often the result of the circumstances. A knowledge of such circumstances helps greatly to create the mood. Sometimes the poem contains suggestions of these, the setting. If not it may at times be guessed at. It is very important that we succeed in recreating the mood of the poet. Every lyric poem is the outcome of an emotional mood. A soul without emotion feels no urge to express itself lyrically, and if, notwithstanding, it proceeds to fashion some thought into lyric form, the result is almost necessarily a cold and lifeless thing. So we must endeavour to enter into the poet's mood. Sometimes the title of the poem discloses it, sometimes the subject chosen implies it. Often we must gather it from the poem itself. We must enter into the poet's mood. We must sympathise in his sympathy, be indignant with his indignation, sorrow in his sorrow and catch his infectious gaiety. We must surrender ourselves to the poet's mood.

When we have succeeded in attuning ourselves to the mood of the poet, it will be an interesting study how the poet creates the mood, how he works out the main idea, what arguments he insinuates, what means he uses to achieve his purpose. Here we come to the diction of the poem. The poet has taken the help of various artifices, he has harnessed them all to one single purpose, the creation of a mood. All those that contribute to this aim have been utilized. Every word or phrase or image binds the poem into

one unity; the mood that runs through the poem impregnates it. We can show what figures of speech help create the imagery sympathetic to the mood, what words or epithets answer the mood, what words throw out suggestions, what words have picturing power, why the poet has used a particular construction, why he has employed a particular arrangement of words, why he has shown a preference to certain words than to others and so on. The significance of similes, metaphors, alliterations, onomatopoeia, the beauty of certain words, how they all contribute to the creation of one dominant mood in the poem, may be pointed out. These felicities of diction can be pointed out with profit, and in more or less detail according to the capacity of the learners. Discretion and tact are obviously needed on the part of the teacher. No rules can be given for the practice of such discretion and tact.

Thus a poem can be studied from several aspects—literal understanding of the poem, the circumstances that begat the poem and the mood, the recreation of the mood, how the poet works out and sustains the mood, the means he employs for his purpose and the diction. The appreciation of a poem will involve the coordination of all these aspects. It is a creative, a synthetic process.

III. *Recapitulation.*

This may be necessary in the lower standards, but may be dispensed with in the higher standards, unless the poem is an inordinately long one. It savours somewhat of a rigid formality, a sort of anticlimax, a sort of 'paradise lost'. It rightly has

its place in the prose lesson where frankly our aim is a linguistic one. There, the more the 'recapitulation' the better. But it is different with poetry. Here our aim is appreciation, enjoyment. When we have just soared with the poet, felt his mood, sailed away in the realm of his creation, to be brought back, to be dragged down can be most jarring. We do not want to 'shake' pupils out of the mood they are still in. And after all, formal recapitulation in the limited time will only produce a formal summary of the theme of the poem. Recapturing the same mood will involve the re-creating of it. But since the Herbartian Formal Steps insist on it and if the teacher must, he may make the pupils 'recapitulate'. All we can pray for is that he inflicts the least possible damage, consonant with his fanatical faith in the efficacy of 'recapitulation'.

IV. Application.

- (a) Final reading of the poem by the teacher followed by the pupils' reading. The reading of the poem by the pupils is important. Poetry is an art of the ear and so they should be encouraged to read aloud as much as possible so that they might catch the rhythm. If we deny rhythm we deny poetry. A period or two should be set apart to train pupils in art of reading poetry aloud.
- (b) Lastly there remains a valuable and fruitful form of study, namely, the application. It is one of the best means of awakening the critical sense,—the power to discriminate between what is good poetry and what is deficient in the qualities of true poetry, 'to separate the precious from the vile'.

Application may take several forms. We may compare and contrast the poem with another poem by the same writer either on the same subject or dealing with a different subject. Or we may compare and contrast the poem with a poem or even a prose passage on the same subject by a different author. Or if we do not find an exact parallel we take any lyric by a different author and compare and contrast the poem with it. We note down the points of difference and of similarity. It is most stimulating and suggestive to compare the treatment of similar themes by different poets, to compare or contrast the treatment of the thought at different stages of its development.

V. *Assignment*

Learning the poem by heart. After the poem has been thoroughly discussed, skimmed, in the class, the pupils may be asked to learn it by heart. Never ask pupils to learn a poem by heart before it is discussed or explained, as was done in the 'good' old days. The teacher used to say, 'Now, boys, learn this poem by heart during this week. We shall study it next week.' Many who were made to learn poetry in this manner came to hate it for the rest of their lives. The teacher who wants his pupils to learn a poem by heart ought to do all in his power to make the task a pleasure. He should make them eager to learn by showing the beauty in it, the interest and value of the piece to be learnt. The learner should understand the general meaning of what he is asked to learn, otherwise it will be a

mere parrot-like repetition. Hence the time to ask pupils to learn a poem by heart is *after* it has been understood and discussed. They thus commit to memory not a jumble of half-understood and almost wholly unappreciated phrases, but something they have learnt to enjoy and which they might even be anxious to remember for its own sake. Besides, the task will have been rendered easy. By the time the poem has been thoroughly understood, and has been read aloud by the teacher once or twice, and by themselves, the poem will in most cases be easily remembered without any extra effort at memorizing it. The boy will almost know the poem already. As we all know, quite young children can sometimes learn poetry with astonishing ease and delight. They will be happy indeed if they can find one who will choose for them the best and thus make their memories a little Golden Treasury of beautiful thoughts and words. Every pupil should be encouraged to have a private, very personal, note book and fill it with his or her favourites and to come to know by heart the treasures therein garnered.

The steps to be followed in the systematic teaching of a poem are outlined above at some little length. Lest the reader should have lost the thread it will be profitable here to summarize them. Thus :

1. Preparation.

1. If needed, we set forth the biographical details of the poet so far as they have coloured the writing of the poem, the historical or other

allusions to reconstruct around the text its true original atmosphere and background. We 'place' the poet and his poem.

2. We introduce the poem directly. While introducing we elicit nothing, summarize nothing, explain nothing

II. Presentation.

1. We read the poem aloud (This by the teacher)
2. By means of 'objectives' we elicit the theme of the poem
3. We discuss the poem. This includes .
 - (a) Understanding the unfamiliar words in their context and then using them exclusively in our discussion.
 - (h) Gaining an imaginative insight into the poem—entering into its spirit—by trying to learn what the poem itself can tell about the circumstances and the mood. What circumstances occasioned the poem? What mood did they create? We must recreate, enter into the poet's mood
 - (c) Learning how the poet creates the mood. What devices does he use? In short, the poet's diction. We work out its general rhythmic and melodic build. We call attention to its literary qualities. Thus the poem is to be discussed from all possible aspects.

III. Recapitulation.

Recapitulation. Best dispensed with in the higher standards.

IV. Application.

Application. This includes :

- (a) Final reading by the teacher and the reading aloud of the poem by the pupils.
- (b) Comparative study. Comparing or contrasting the poem with other pieces.

V. Assignment.

1. Assignment. Asking the pupils to learn the poem by heart.
2. If there remain to be given any explanations or items of information external to the poem and not considered to be essential under the first heading, they may be given here.

(Please also refer to the chart on p 93, 'The Development of a Prose Lesson, Higher Standards.' The chart is equally applicable to 'The Development of a Poetry Lesson in Higher Standards with such modifications as will easily suggest themselves to the reader after reading the foregoing discussion.)

The Poetry Lesson in the Lower Standards.

Although in essentials the same the treatment of a poem here must necessarily differ from that in the higher standards because of the difference in age of the two groups of learners. Before we proceed to outline the steps to be followed we may make a few observations. Do not expect reasons from the pupils in the lower standards for this or for that. Do not expect from them the significance of this line or of that word or of the whole poem. You may discuss the movement, the rhythm, the sound-music, but no significance, no arguments, no morals. We should make the pupils feel the joy, the sound element, the peculiar way in which the poet

arranges the thoughts, presents his pictures. We need not go further, we must not aim too high because the pupils are not in a position to give out what you ask them to deliver. If they are charmed that is enough. Let them enjoy the poem, derive joy from the rhythm and the music of the poem. Any overelaborate appreciation or discussion of suggestions is neither necessary nor desirable.

The steps to be followed

I Introduction

- (a) Introduction and explanation of unfamiliar words
In the higher standards we do this during the discussion of the poem when such unfamiliar words or expressions are explained in their context. This is as it should be for, as we have seen, such words have their own associations in the poem and are best understood in their context. Ideal as the procedure is, unfortunately it cannot be adopted in the case of the lower standards for pupils' powers of understanding have not been sufficiently developed. So all the unfamiliar words must be explained previous to the study of the poem. This may be done with the help of a picture. The picture may be one that illustrates the poem but the teacher should restrict the use of the picture to the explanation of new words only and should reveal nothing of the subject-matter of the poem itself.
- (b) To introduce the poem itself. Some preliminary talk leading to the subject matter of the poem is all that is necessary. Or the teacher may introduce the poem from a picture drawn to illustrate it. But here too the teacher should use the picture merely to introduce the poem and

should discard it when it has served its only legitimate purpose—a medium of introduction. No detailed discussion on the picture is permissible at this stage. We must not give out any thing of the poem during the introduction either by way of introducing the new words, or the preliminary talk or the talk on the picture preparatory to taking up a poem. We must reserve it for the pupils to find out. (Also see pp. 140-141 *Introduction, Poetry Lesson in the Higher Standards*).

II Presentation

- (a) Reading of the poem—the whole of it—by the teacher. Even in the lower standards do not cut up a poem. If required, he may read it twice or even thrice. He should read it slowly, distinctly and clearly bring out the rhythm. But let him not sing the poem. Enough has already been said in the foregoing pages about how to read a poem.
- (b) General thought-getting by two or three broad questions. This elicits the main theme of the poem. It furnishes something round which to weave further questioning and discussion. (See discussion on 'objectives' on pp. 87, 88)
- (c) Discussion in detail. The broad questions or objectives will themselves provide further avenues for discussion. All the different aspects of the poem—the why, when, where, how, who, etc,—should be discussed. Try to reconstruct the circumstances and the mood. Does the poem itself suggest these, and if so, how? Recreate and help pupils recreate the poet's mood, to be one with him. Catch the spirit of the poem (See

pp. 143-148 *Presentation, Poetry Lesson in the Higher Standards*)

- (d) Lastly we may point out the beauty of a word or two, the music in the poem, the rhythm, the repetition of a particular sound perhaps, the aptness of a word—how its substitution by any other word is far from satisfactory—and so on. But we should not be carried away by our own enthusiasm. We are here dealing with very young children whose powers of understanding are yet in infancy. The teacher concerned will best be able to decide how far he should go. Even if he finds it necessary to omit this part of the study altogether the poem can nonetheless be enjoyed.

III *Recapitulation*

Sometimes useful in the lower standards as it helps create a sort of confidence in them. The teacher can get the theme of the poem and its development from the pupils.

IV. *Application*

- (a) Model reading by the teacher, once or twice if necessary. Then simultaneous reading by the pupils followed by individual reading.
- (b) If the teacher can give the pupils another very simple poem by the same author or by a different author on the same subject he may do so. He may even take up the poem in the class. To those who are good at drawing he may suggest illustrating the poem. The finished sketches should then be exhibited.

V. Assignment.

Pupils may be asked to learn the poem by heart. The teacher should assure himself whether the pupils have really understood the poem before he asks them to commit it to memory. Secondly he should see that they are able to recite it with ease, naturalness and proper intonation.

Should Pupils be made to learn Verse Forms?

Should prosody be taught in schools? Should they know verse form or metre of every poem they read? No. This is entirely unnecessary. The mastering of the nomenclature and classification of metres can be a very formidable task. In all mercy we cannot expect the pupil to know and remember the meaning of spondee and anapaest, asclepiads and pyrrhics and amphibrachs, caesura and anacrusis, the acéphalous iambic heptasyllable and the trochaic tetrameter catalectic. And even if he knows them he will not be any the nearer to the meaning of poetry. The schoolboy, therefore, may well leave the matter alone. Even without these needless technicalities the young readers can be shown by intelligent and skilful reading aloud the stresses or beats in a line, the variations in the length of lines and the position of their stresses. We can also draw their attention to the choice of a particular metre—how the sound is in keeping with the sense. For example, sense and sound are admirably harmonized in the following lines by Browning:—

“I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;

I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped nit throe;”
or in Byron's,

“Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean-roll!

Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;”

In each of the two cases the poet has chosen a verse-pattern that goes in with the sense. If the pupils can come to

differentiate between one verse pattern and another and to appreciate its aptness for the sense it expresses, that is enough, we need go on further. Lastly, there is one verse form—the sonnet—that should be studied. The sonnet is a short poem of fourteen lines. In the Italian form, the fourteen lines are divided into two parts—the octave (eight lines) and the sestet (six lines). There is a pause after the eighth line. Lines 1, 4, 5, 8 rhyme together in the octave (abbaabba), in the sestet lines 9, 12, 10, 13, 11, 14 (cdccdc) rhyme together. In the English form the fourteen lines are divided into three quatrains (four-line stanza) and a couplet. In the couplet, the lines rhyme together, in the quatrains, the rhymes are alternate. In the first part of a sonnet, there is usually stated a problem and the second part contains the solution. In the first an idea is gradually worked up to a climax while in the second part there is a step-down—in anticlimax.

Literary Criticism Should pupils attempt it?

Sometimes pupils are asked to produce 'critical appreciation'. These appear to be contradictory terms. Criticism is opposed to appreciation. Appreciation implies sympathy with the poet, being one with the poet. Criticism implies the absence of sympathy, a fault-finding attitude, a momentary disbelief in what the poet has to say. Appreciation and criticism are thus two different attitudes. Shall we have criticism as well as appreciation? Criticism is not to be encouraged because it presupposes a thorough knowledge and understanding of all the works of the poet which is very often far from being the case. If pupils do attempt it it is insincere. It is aping the annotator. Many annotators do append 'critical appreciation' to the poems in their 'Notes' and 'Guides' and pupils cram them. But this sort of thing is neither criticism nor appreciation. Criticism is a highly

developed science and children cannot be expected to know it. It should be reserved for the University stage and there too for a special branch of the B. A. class. Those who set questions requiring criticisms of poems from pupils are asking for the impossible and are bound to be disappointed.

If criticism must be attempted it must, it is needless to say, come after the poem has been thoroughly read and understood. Never should anybody's estimate of the poem, his opinion of the theme, of the incidents, of the characters, be presented to the pupils before they have read the poem. Very often we come across text-books wherein the prefaces to poems, or for that matter, all the extracts contain their evaluation either by the anthologist himself or by well-known critics. This is a tragedy it is like putting the cart before the horse. What is equally tragic is that sometimes the teacher himself prefaces the study of a poem by his critical remarks on the work or punctuates the course of the lesson by his comments. Such a course can only lead to disaster. We see in colleges the sad spectacle of candidates cramming criticisms on works which in their originals are not read at all. The candidates' acquaintance with the texts is nil and yet they presume to criticise them. In such cases requiring criticism of a poem from candidates can only mean a test of not whether they have studied it but whether they have read works of criticism on it. This habit of accepting another person's judgment must be discouraged. After a poem has been read thoughtfully by a pupil let him form his own opinion about it. After he has done so let him compare his opinion with those of other critics. He will be encouraged if he finds that his judgment in any way agrees with theirs. Where there is disagreement he will be led to make a further study of the poem. A valuable result will be gained if a pupil can form a considered opinion of his own and, when challenged, is able to justify it intelligently.

And after all, is criticism of a poem a desirable thing in itself? Criticism does not concern itself with the appreciative interpretation of a poem but rather limits itself to its technical side. It thus views a poem from a different angle, from the angle of science rather than the angle of literature. The critic gets behind the scenes, he peeps into the poet's workshop. He studies how such and such a writer achieves his effects, lays bare a poet's tricks of style, criticizes another's faulty versification, and exposes yet another's lapses from poetic diction. Such a study of technique may have its use for the critics, but we are not concerned with it. We are learning to love flowers, we are not studying botany. The object of reading poetry, especially in the case of the young, is not the appreciation of literary craftsmanship, it is the appreciation of the beauty, of the goodness of the work produced by the craftsman. Let us not pry into the tricks of his trade. Between the critic and the appreciator there is all the difference that exists between the man who at the play thinks only of the clever acting and the excellent make up and the man who surrenders himself to the thing enacted and thrills with the emotion of real life. Hence let us content ourselves with being enchanted by the magician and let us not be tempted to get behind his tricks lest we should be disillusioned.

Paraphrasing its place in the teaching of poetry

Paraphrasing, they say, is the test of the pupil's understanding of a poem. Is the pupil's ability to paraphrase a poem a guarantee of his understanding of it? No. The poet compresses much in a restricted space. Like the Sutras of Panini a poem contains a world of meaning and must be elaborated to be understood fully. The poet has written his poem in the only best way possible and to attempt to render it in other words is to attempt the impossible. Any

tempt to give in short in simple prose what the poet has to say is not possible. If you do it you can only do a part of what the poet has to say. You can expand what the poet has to say, you can discuss his suggestions, you can write an essay, a monograph, a book on it, but you cannot compress or say in fewer words what has already been compressed by the poet. As soon as you change the special arrangement of words used by the poet you will find that your product hardly bears any comparison to the original. All that the poet has to say cannot be conveyed in a paraphrase. So there is not much point in expecting a paraphrase from pupils. It defeats its own end and does not achieve what it sets out to achieve.

Paraphrasing, therefore, has no place in the *teaching* of poetry, but as an exercise in language it can be valuable. It is a convenient way of finding out whether a poem is understood or not. It requires giving the skeleton of thought and involves searching for words and expressions which most nearly render the meaning of the original. As a literary exercise a paraphrase may be required of the pupils in the end, after the poem has been thoroughly understood and appreciated.

It should clearly be understood here that the aim of paraphrasing is not in any way to help in the process of appreciating a poem. It is merely a literary exercise, a test of the pupil's power of expressing in simple prose the substance of the poem. It is a test of pupil's comprehension as well as of his expression. Being a linguistic exercise it is independent of appreciation. Paraphrasing should come after the thorough understanding of a poem. But many times unseen poems are set in question-papers and pupils are asked to paraphrase them. In such cases the only intention of the examiner in setting such a question is to test the pupil's powers of comprehension and literary expression. He wants

to ascertain how far the pupils succeed in getting at the central idea in the poem independently of any outside aid and how far they can express themselves unaided. As such, there can be no harm in setting a paraphrase question. The teacher, however, should not lose sight of the underlying aim in paraphrasing — a literary exercise having value as a test of understanding, and as a means of expression. Paraphrasing can be no substitute for appreciation because it concentrates attention on the meaning of words in a narrow sense and makes the readers ignore the beauty of the poem. Even as a literary exercise, poems of great beauty, those containing greatest or noblest thought should not be set for paraphrasing. In stead of setting poems for paraphrasing the teacher will find this kind of exercise most profitable where he asks his pupils to translate into modern or simple English a diffuse prose passage written in archaic English. A too simple or too difficult a poem should not be set for paraphrasing because in the case of the former paraphrasing will be a mere juggling with words and in the case of the latter the pupils will fail to understand it. (For the method to be followed in teaching how to paraphrase a poem, refer to 'Paraphrasing' in Chapter XVI 'The Teaching of Composition,' where the procedure is dealt with in detail.)

The Use of the Blackboard in an Appreciation Lesson

The legitimate function of the Blackboard consists in its use for writing down difficult words and their explanations, summaries or their development, drawing diagrams or pictures and exposing objectives. But in an Appreciation lesson we can dispense with the blackboard altogether. Even the objectives may be stated orally. Using the blackboard can mean a dissipation of energy. When you are discussing a poem feverishly, when you are in the heat of it, do not distract yourself or your class by frequent journeys to the blackboard.

At the end of the lesson, when you are reviewing, you may put down on the blackboard the summary of the main facts, the characters and some of the important expressions or words. Even then some of the teachers of poetry would prefer to summarize orally and not to use the blackboard at all. In the lower standards, however, the blackboard has to be used for explaining difficult words and writing down the summary while 'recapitulating.'

So, in the higher standards the blackboard may remain untouched till the very end of the lesson. But there are some poems which require the use of the blackboard earlier, particularly if the teacher is good at drawing. The teacher says, "Let us draw a picture. Help me build it." He then proceeds to draw the picture bit by bit illustrating the poem and the pupils supply the details till at the end the whole picture has been completed and is before the class. If such a running blackboard sketch can be developed during the lesson with the cooperation of the class, it can make for a highly interesting lesson for the pupils themselves take part in the development of the sketch and watch it gradually built up before their own eyes. Such a running blackboard sketch is immensely more valuable and instructive than a readymade prefinished picture presented before the class for the pupils have had no hand in its making. Besides, this synthetic process of developing a running sketch, of piecing together bits till the completed whole is exposed to the view of the pupils makes the poem thoroughly understood as the pupils themselves supply all the details, the teacher being merely an instrument in drawing them. A knowledge of elementary drawing is a very valuable asset to every teacher and those who possess it should exploit it to the full.

The Place of Silent Reading in Poetry:

Enough has already been said about the importance and value of good loud reading of poetry. Rhythm is the soul

of poetry which is essentially meant for the ear. It is only when that rhythm is brought out and sensed, only through its appeal to the ear, that we can appreciate poetry. (See p 132) Some say that the poet suggests thoughts and that these can best be appreciated by quiet musing. There are certain thoughts which can best be understood by quiet meditation. Music is not all in all. There is something of it but not all. Silent brooding over words is also necessary. This is the gist of the opinion of this school of thought. While what they say may be true of certain mystic poems and in the case of adults, it can hardly be true in the case of children. Mystic or meditative poems are no fare for children and they cannot be expected to hear with their eyes. However, certain teachers are fond of giving silent reading to the pupils immediately after they have read the poem. This seems entirely unnecessary. The teacher, if he is a good reader, has, by his reading, warmed his pupils up, has created a particular mood. Why dissipate it, why fritter it away by insisting on silent reading? Why not utilize it by an immediate discussion on the broad facts? Why not utilize, cash, this enthusiasm of the pupils? And after all, when you proceed to a detailed study of the poem, when you discuss it, you ask pupils certain questions, answers to which they find out from the poem. To find out these answers the pupils have to scan the whole poem, go rapidly through it, skimming it, so to say. This is a kind of silent reading and very properly fits in its place. It is much more preferable to the very formal silent reading on which certain teachers, very improperly, insist. What we want to avoid in an appreciation lesson is the needless dissipation of energy. So, the steps in an appreciation lesson would be — (1) Introduction (ii) Reading by the teacher (iii) Discussion on broad aspects (iv) Detailed discussion—pupils go rapidly over the poem, skimming it as it were, to find

out certain details (This a kind of silent reading). A special silent reading step is not necessary. Moral — formal silent reading as such has no place in an appreciation lesson.

Poetry : Correlation with other Subjects :

English and other subjects of instruction touch one another at many points and, within certain limits, can do much to help one another. Thus there can be a very living connexion between English and History. Many of the historical romances, of Scott among others, are literature as well as History. By encouraging pupils to read historical novels we are helping the study of English as well as of History. Poetry has also a part to play in the history class. History will undoubtedly gain because poetry is one of the best ways of making history live again, of making alive the emotions, the passions of the past. Thus Longfellow's 'Paul Revere's Ride', Browning's 'Cavalier Tunes', Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade' bring back the past to young people in a way no history book can do. In the history class poetry has a further mission as an inspirer of patriotism. 'Rule Britannia,' Campbell's 'The Battle of the Baltic', Macaulay's 'The Armada', illustrate the point. The English teacher, therefore, should be as willing to render assistance to the history teacher as the latter should be anxious to solicit it from the former. The history teacher should enquire of the English teacher as to the availability of suitable poems bearing on the period of history he is dealing in the class and, if available, the poems should be read aloud in the class or exhibited on the notice-board for the pupils to take them down in their notebooks. Only such poems should be chosen however, as are of the best quality and are suited to the pupils' age and capacity.

In the teaching of Geography, too, such poems as 'Columbus', 'The Discovery', Longfellow's 'Hiawatha',

Masefield's 'The Cargoes', 'The Golden Journey to Samarkand', can make the geography lesson very vivid. In 'Hiawatha' we read a very graphic description of the New World, the rivers, the forests, the life and manners of the Red Indians. In 'The Discovery' we see the simple savage bewildered and terror-stricken at the sight of Columbus' stately galleons, a sight which his eyes had never before beheld. In 'The Cargoes' Masefield makes the panorama of the romance of sea transportation through the ages pass before our eyes. The geography teacher will be well advised to refer to the English teacher for material that he may make use of.

Poetry, too, ought to find its way into the 'Nature Study' class. The reading of Nature poems—'The Spring' for example,—will have a different appeal to the learners. It will be very interesting to see how the poet describes Nature at different times of the year. Incidentally, pupils with their powers of observation trained and knowledge acquired during the 'Nature Study' lessons may be able to judge whether the description in a nature poem is true to nature and whether the poet has erred in his observation.

Above are suggested some of the ways in which teachers of different subjects can, with mutual advantage render, help to one another and make the teaching of their subjects more lively. The subject itself becomes a living thing. Such outside aids provide new angles of vision and import interest into what must otherwise be a monotonous routine. However, there are obvious limitations and it will be a great mistake to expect too much from a partnership between any two subjects. The teacher of poetry will remain the teacher of poetry and the History teacher a History teacher and neither can usurp the functions of the other. The English master and the History master are not expected, in the name of correlation, to do work which legitimately is not their concern. What is wanted is not so much formal correlation as a

greater sense of cooperation, which will make much incidental correlation practicable and desirable.

Epilogue.

In the foregoing pages we have discussed at length what poetry is, what is its nature, what it does for us, how best to appreciate poetry, how a systematic study of poetry should be made. We had been dwelling in ethereal regions. We had transported ourselves into the sublime atmosphere of poetry, sensed the stuff which poetry is made of. With reverent tread we entered the shrine of Muse and with wonderment and still more reverent attitude gazed at the gossamer-like fabric of poetry, airy, pure, noble. If, therefore, we should accept poetry into our hearts we should accept it with the same simplicity, aesthetic pleasure, unaffected joy, purity of motive, nobleness of thought and reverence which we instinctively felt ourselves dedicating at the feet of poetry. That is almost a truism; but how often neglected in the teaching of poetry! We cannot do better than conclude this chapter in the words of Dover Wilson, "Literature was written for enjoyment Wee be to him who makes a hell of this earthly paradise, who plants the fair meadows of poesy with the thorn of grammar, the briar of etymology and the prickly, unappetizing thistle of historical annotation, who mars the face of Beauty with the mask of learned triviality, so that the children come to think of her, their elder sister, as a harsh taskmistress poetry is as the king's daughter, all-glorious within and her clothing of wrought gold; and if she be not brought with joy and gladness, let the door of the school be closed altogether against her. So at least, when the children come upon her one day outside, she will wear the face, not of an old enemy, but of a friend they have long been seeking."

Alas! This ideal is not always easy to realize, but not for that should we cease to aim at it.

CHAPTER XIV

SILENT AND ORAL READING

Importance of Reading

The importance of reading is twofold. Firstly, it is a very important aspect of language learning. It is a means by which new words are constantly acquired and added to the everexpanding vocabulary, and by which the associations of old words are revived and strengthened. As explained in the chapter on 'Rapid Readers' the aim in extensive reading is to provide opportunities to come across words or language forms already learnt. The study of readers intended for intensive study adds to the stock of words, enlarges the vocabulary, the study of extensive readers arranges a meeting with these 'old friends', renews their acquaintance and thus provides further practice in their use. Thus, from the point of view of language learning, reading has a very important part to play. It is a direct means of increasing our knowledge of a language, and of enriching our vocabulary.

Secondly, reading is also important as a tool of education. It is a means of gathering information, knowledge. A man cannot travel very far on the road to knowledge without reading. Reading leads to knowledge and thus to culture. It has been said that culture is reading, that wellreadness is synonymous with culture. The books written by the 'mighty minds of old' hold in them the treasury of the world's sum-total of knowledge, the accumulated experience and wisdom of ages recorded by generations of competent thinkers. They are the golden key that unlocks for you the vast treasure house of knowledge in all its branches. They make you 'a citizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages'. All this knowledge, ever growing, lies there waiting to be gathered by one who knows how to gather it,—the

reader. Thus, in its second aspect, that of gathering information or knowledge, reading is of even greater importance. There are books that deal with every conceivable branch of human activity. There are also magazines and newspapers. What an inexhaustible field to browse in! It is in this second aspect that reading is pursued after school, in adult life. Very often, in many cases, it is also pursued for the pleasure it affords, for the recreation it provides to a jaded mind.

To sum up, reading enables us to increase our knowledge of a language by fixing the vocabulary already acquired and by enlarging it; and secondly it introduces us to the vast treasure house of knowledge and enables us to acquire it. It can also be a pleasurable relaxation for the mind. So much for the importance of reading. We may now turn to a consideration and relative advantages, functions of the two types of reading—silent and oral.

Silent Reading and Oral Reading.

As stated above, reading can be pursued with two aims, the linguistic one, i. e. increasing the vocabulary, and the knowledge aim. There is the third one, that of reading for pleasure. All the three are very often interconnected in practice. It is usually said that oral reading is more suited to the early stage than to an advanced stage and that it is most valuable from the linguistic point of view; or that silent reading best answers the purpose when one is reading to acquire information or for pleasure. These can only be broad generalizations and one cannot with any definiteness assign to each its exclusive sphere. It will be useful to take each in turn and examine its utility.

Oral Reading.

Oral reading is the foundation to any other type of reading. We have already seen in an earlier chapter the

process of language learning. After the stages of hearing, subconscious understanding and articulation or speech comes the recognition and reading of words and sentences. At first the process of reading might be slow and difficult for the pupils but with practice they come to acquire speed and facility in reading. Thus a start with oral reading is made in the lowest standard where the learning of English begins. It is continued throughout the school course though, with increasing facility and speed, silent reading is introduced in the later stages.

Again, nothing is more important in these days of careless pronunciation than to encourage the correct speaking of English. Throughout the school course this aim must be steadily kept in view. Oral reading helps greatly to realize this aim. In addition to speech practice gained by way of oral discussion on texts, oral composition, debates etc, wherein the teacher will relentlessly insist on correct pronunciation, reading aloud offers further opportunities for correct speech practice. The teacher reads the passage aloud and the pupils imitate him. All the lessons in the text should be read aloud under the supervision of the teacher not only by four or five good readers but by every individual pupil.

It should be the aim of every school to teach every pupil to read aloud audibly, clearly and intelligently, that is, in sympathy with the subject matter. Unfortunately the reading of Indian pupils leaves much to be desired. They cannot even read a group of words together. They read word by word, uttering each word in isolation as if one word has no connexion with the word that follows it or has preceded it. A word is not a unit of thought. For the meaning to be intelligible certain words must be read in groups. A phrase or a meaningful group of words is the unit. This fact must be driven home into the minds of the pupils. So in reading aloud correct phrasing or grouping of

words to be pronounced in one breath is of utmost importance. A wrong grouping can not only jar our ears but it can also violate the sense which the writer means to convey. It is taking inexcusable liberties with the language. The pupils must be shown where to pause, which words are to be pronounced together, on what words is the emphasis to be laid. The teacher's responsibility is very great in this respect as the pupils look upon him for guidance. By reading aloud correctly he should show how to read clearly, naturally, in sympathy with the subject-matter, shunning stilted, affected or artificial methods. Stagey, pedantic speech after the manner of a theatrical elocutionist is not the same thing as good reading and must, therefore, be avoided. Correct reading is a matter of correct emphasis. If the reading is to possess a living quality it must be marked by right emphasis. It is emphasis mainly that gives life to spoken language.

We have already noted in an earlier paragraph the importance of oral reading as an aid to correct pronunciation. Language cannot be separated from sound. Language is speech. If we want to learn English we must speak it to learn it, and let us speak it in the way it is spoken, the native's way. The correct intonation, the correct emphasis must be acquired. Very often the sound endows the words with a meaning, a traditional hallow, an emotional appeal which must suffer greatly with any variation from accepted practice. If we speak another people's language we must speak it as they do; we have no right to mispronounce it. It is desecrating the language, violating its spirit and its intelligibility. The teacher must know correct pronunciation himself and train his pupils in pronouncing words correctly while reading. How many teachers take the trouble of referring to Pronouncing Dictionaries—that by Daniel Jones is an authority on the subject, and almost any respectable

dictionary gives hints on pronunciation--and ascertain the correct pronunciation of words? If they do and compare the pronunciations given therein with their own there will be many a disillusionment. Chances are that many of their pupils will in later life have occasions to meet with and talk to Englishmen, or have opportunities to proceed to England for study, business or pleasure. If their minds have not been disillusioned of incorrect pronunciations acquired in early life, thanks to teachers whose own pronunciations leave much to be desired, one can visualize the consequences both tragic and comic.

Needless to say, pupils should be made to read only what has been thoroughly understood. It is only then that their reading will be rendered intelligible. Reading aloud at sight is always a difficult process. If you ask a pupil to read a passage which he has not understood you make him face a double task--to understand the passage by himself and to read it such as would be intelligible to others. Both the tasks end miserably in failure. Without a previous understanding of the passage the pupil will not know where to pause, or where to lay emphasis. As we have already noted, it is emphasis mainly that gives life to a spoken language, makes it intelligible, and right emphasis can come only from understanding. Even where a passage has been understood previous to a reading of it, pupils should be allowed to read it through to themselves before being required to read it aloud. This will enable them to master the mere mechanical difficulties of reading and by giving them a sense of confidence will render their reading fluent and impressive.

All the 'lessons' in the English Text appointed for a class must be read aloud first by the teacher and then by every individual pupil. This is especially true in the case of poetry. Much of the charm of poetry--its rhythm, the music of words--will escape us if we do not read it aloud. There

are also other pieces of literature which depend upon sound emphasis for their effect. Great speeches, orations, debates, sermons and other rhetorical efforts fall under this class. It is as speeches that they first came into existence before they passed into literature. They were meant to influence, persuade, sway their audience and the speaker used all the orator's art at his command. To recapture the same atmosphere, to recreate the same effect, they must be read aloud in such a way as to give to every word or sentence in them its true meaning and emphasis. Scenes from Shakespeare or from other dramatists' works, one-act plays, must be read aloud to be enjoyed. Or better, it will both be instructive and interesting if selected pupils enact the roles of the dramatic personæ in the play. The enacting of little plays at the time of the Annual Social is now becoming increasingly common. Many pupils reveal surprising ability to speak and act well. Such performances serve to raise the general standard of articulation. It is also a good plan to institute reading prizes for each standard. Not only are they a valuable aid to reading but they are also a stimulus to correct utterance and the giving of their best by the pupils.

Good reading very often depends upon the kind of material that we ask pupils to read. A wrong choice of material can lead to bad unimaginative reading though the fault is attributed to the weakness of the pupil. Poorly written stuff is hard to read and results in an utter lack of interest. Reading such poor stuff becomes a bore instead of a pleasure, a task rather than a pleasurable anticipation. For although the pupil will read almost anything when commanded by his master to do so we must aim at voluntary effort. We must create an eagerness to read, and see that the motive force comes from the pupil's own pleasure and pride in a good rendering of a passage. This eagerness, this motive force, this interest will not be forthcoming if the

stuff to be read is dull, uninspiring or clumsy in construction. Long involved constructions, passages containing too much detailed information, use of too many difficult or archaic words, and passages containing much abstract thought can be depended upon to wean even an ardent reader from his love of reading. It has been stated above that the whole of the appointed text should be read aloud by the pupils. Unfortunately not all the extracts included in textbooks are above criticism from the point of view of interest and general suitability to the learners for whom they are intended. In this selfimposed task of selecting extracts for his projected anthology the compiler is influenced by conventions, personal prejudices, the extent of his acquaintance with English literature and limitations consequent upon it, his own literary judgment, and almost every consideration other than the interests and needs of the learners. But sometimes he is merciful in that he includes more extracts than are likely to be read in a year. The teacher concerned will do well to exercise his own judgment in selecting passages for study.

Lastly, we may consider some of the factors that can promote good reading. The pupil's posture while reading must be attended to. Standing properly and holding the book at a distance of about eighteen inches make the physical side of reading least exhausting and as such will claim a thoughtful teacher's attention. He will also give hints as to the pitch of voice, the pace, the voice pauses, and the like. Again, the pupil should be made to stand before the class and read. He should be made to feel that he is reading not primarily for the teacher but for the whole class. The knowledge that he is reading for an attentive and critical audience gives a different colour to the reading. He feels the need to be distinct, audible and intelligible. While a pupil is reading aloud to a class, the latter should

not be reading in their books but should look at the reader and watch and hear him reading. The reader will thus come to feel his responsibility and put forth his best. We thus arouse in the reader the communicative instinct (because he is reading for an audience, his class), the creative or constructive instinct which seeks overflow through expression, and the instinct of self-display (because he is exhibiting to the class his achievement) (Also see pp 30-31)

The standard of reading aloud, although improving, is still inexcusably low. With proper directions from the teacher, who himself must be an excellent reader, as regards posture, voice, audibility, pauses and emphasis, and with the selection of good reading material—easy enough for the pupils to be interested in—a tolerable measure of proficiency in this direction is not difficult of attainment. What is important is that the teacher should become alive to his duty of training his pupils to read aloud.

To sum up,—(1) Loud reading is the foundation to silent reading (2) It begins when language learning begins, i.e. in the first standard and is continued throughout the school course (3) It promotes a proper pronunciation of words and correct speech practice (4) It makes language more intelligible by means of proper pauses, stresses and emphasis. (5) It should come after the passage to be read has been understood (6) Speeches, orations, plays etc are proper material for loud reading (7) It also depends for success on proper material,—poor stuff resulting in lack of urge to read, or interest. (8) Posture of the reader etc should be attended to (9) The pupil should read for the class and not for the teacher (10) Reading prizes should be instituted (11) and lastly, that the teacher himself should be a good reader and should instruct his class in the art of good reading. A special reading lesson or two should be taken after an extract has been thoroughly studied. The pupil's reading

should be preceded by the teacher's model reading. (12) The reciting of choice prose pieces promotes good speaking and incidentally good reading. The memorizing and reciting of selected prose passages draws attention to the rhythm, the pauses and the emphases of various models of English sentences, as such they are contributory to good reading and deserve encouragement.

Stammering Before proceeding to a consideration of Silent Reading we must here make a note of a common enough defect of speech, namely, stammering. Ignorance or indifference, possibly both, have led many teachers to a neglect of those unfortunates who are entirely left to themselves. Considered incurable the defect was never investigated into and was left to 'cure' itself. Careful investigations, both physiological and psychological, have shown that the defect (it is not a disease) can be attributed to (1) an inherent defect in the formation of vocal organs, or (2) faulty muscular movement. The first of these—faulty articulatory apparatus—is an inborn physical defect. Cures can sometimes be effected in certain cases by skilled surgical treatment. Others, more obstinate type, are beyond even of a surgeon's skill and nothing can be done for such unfortunates except extending to them our sympathy. Happily such cases of congenital deformity of vocal organs are not many. It is rather the other type of stammering, that due to faulty muscular movements, that is usually met with and found in the majority of cases. This faulty muscular movement is due to (1) physical weakness consequent upon emaciation of body (2) nervous weakness due to a generally debilitated frame, and (3) an overpresent 'superiority complex', that is, a painful consciousness of the superiority of others over oneself and a corresponding sense of one's own inferiority or limitations. Such subjects are always extremely self-conscious in the presence of others and are constantly haunted by the fear of

ridicule. They are extremely shy for the imaginary sense of shame and mortification is a powerful deterrent to any initiative or to a successful completion of it. They are forever painfully aware of their imaginary failings and dread that every venture of theirs will be greeted with derision. Diffidence born of this everpresent fear of ridicule effectively prevents them from any voluntary effort in public, and when they are made to read, the nervous strain and the muscular twitchings attendant upon it result in faltering. If these faulty muscular movements are continued for any length of time they tend to *habituate*, requiring correspondingly prolonged efforts at eradication. With the causes of stammering known, the expedients to a cure indicate themselves. They are, (1) The underlying fear and nervousness must first be removed. The victim should, by encouragement and approval of his efforts, be made to realize his own capabilities and potential powers. Gently yet assuredly he should be made to feel that he is mentally and intellectually the equal of his classmates, in no way inferior to them but even superior so far as certain things are concerned. We must reveal him to himself; he must be made to know himself. A patient and sympathetic teacher will also try, by means of gentle persuasive questioning, to investigate and ascertain what in the beginning led to the formation of this self-deprecating tendency. Perhaps he will unearth from the boy's unconscious some incident in which a foolish and thoughtless remark by the father or the mother or the teacher or any other adult must have greeted the sensitive boy's honest efforts at self-expression. Finding his best efforts condemned to ridicule and persecuted with unfavourable comparisons of himself with others, there is little wonder that the boy persuaded himself to accept others' opinions of himself as true. Little could the offender have realized that by his seemingly innocent remarks

nervousness the boy should be encouraged to read aloud in private either alone or with a friend before being made to read to others (4) It has been found that an insistence on nose breathing and prolonged exercises in steady deep breathing are greatly beneficial, as such, they should be tried (5) If the boy gets into difficulty with particular sounds and consonants, special exercises into them should be resorted to (6) A markedly rhythmic speech considerably reduces stammer The boy should, therefore, be encouraged to recite a good deal of verse or even prose passages in a sing-song fashion "A steady rhythm rapped out on the desk during speech will go far to cure mild cases, and, if the habit can be maintained by the pupil himself, so much the better" (Tomkinson) (7) Needless to say, the victim should never be laughed at, ridiculed or made to feel small The teacher should do all he can to encourage him in his brave efforts to overcome the defect He should also impress upon the minds of the rest of the boys in the class the necessity, nay the duty, of being sympathetic towards their hapless comrade (8) Of course, miraculous results cannot be expected Even with the best intentions in the world and the most sympathetic and encouraging attitude a reasonably satisfactory improvement must take some time In the case of obstinate cases of persistent stammering, expert advice and treatment in a reputable clinic are indicated

Silent Reading

Silent reading must always come after oral reading It is only when pupils know how to read aloud that they should be asked to read silently Reading is a complex process It coordinates two activities or processes, firstly, the mechanism of reading i.e. recognizing the words from their spelling and then uttering them, and secondly, understanding the sense of the words and sentences read For, all reading to be intelligent, must be accompanied by the understanding of what is

read. Also it will be a meaningless lable, a mere turling at print. We all see how in the beginning pupils try slowly and painfully to scan each word, comprehend it, and then utter it. Their reading is painfully slow and laborious for they have not yet acquired a mastery over the mechanical process of quick recognition of words. As soon as the pupils are able to recognize words faster than they can pronounce them we can give them silent reading. It is rarely that pupils acquire this skill or ability earlier than in the third standard. Silent reading, therefore, should be set from the fourth standard onwards and never previous to it. We find teachers setting silent reading to pupils in second and third standards and fondly hoping for answers to objectives which they write on the blackboard. Deprived of the advantage of the teacher's reading and left to themselves they struggle on with the silent reading, manfully trying to recognize each word singly and comprehend its meaning and then grouping the words together—in the sentence—to understand the meaning of the whole sentence. There still remains the task of understanding the general import of the passage and find out or guess at the answers to the objectives provided by the teacher. One or two bright pupils may be able to do it but their achievement is not representative of that of the rest of the class. How much better if the teacher himself reads the passage aloud and by his impressive reading, marked by proper intonation, pauses, stresses and emphasis, helps the pupils to a better and quicker understanding of the passage than would be possible in the case of silent reading! Having thus paved the way to the understanding of the passage he should then straightaway plunge into a discussion on it. Silent reading can at times be a fetish. I have known teachers who, even when they have read the passage aloud, set silent reading of the same and proceed to write objectives on the blackboard. Valuable time is thus lost and in the meanwhile

the enthusiasm, the mood, which the teacher has by his good reading aroused in his pupils, is dissipated, frittered away. Why not utilize this mood immediately by proceeding directly to the discussion on the passage? The teachers who cling so pitifully to silent reading lose sight of the fact that they are here dealing with a foreign tongue and that whereas the study of the vernacular can admit of silent reading even in the first standard the same cannot be true in the case of the study of English. The pupil's acquaintance with and proficiency in the use of the mother-tongue must naturally be vastly superior to their knowledge of English. To indulge in a comparison, the attainments in English of a boy in the first standard of a High School are roughly of the same level as those of a boy in vernacular standard III in his mother tongue. Hence, while silent reading in the mother-tongue can be set over from the first standard, it should not be set to English till after the third standard.

Oral reading diminishes as we go to the higher standards and is progressively supplemented and in some cases substituted by silent reading. This does not mean that there is no silent reading in the lower standards at all. Here we have a modified form of silent reading, not full-blooded but occasional and incidental. There is a certain form of silent reading even in the first standard. When pupils recognize a word written on a blackboard before pronouncing it, or when they silently read a command or direction written on a placard and obey it, what is it but a kind of silent reading? Various devices are used to train pupils in the lower standards in reading silently. Sometimes the teacher exhibits placards to his pupils and gives them three or four minutes in which to read the instructions printed on them and obey them. The Magic Lantern, too, can be utilized to flash commands or instructions on the screen. In the Monroe Tests, extensively employed in America, one of the devices is to present

paragraphs along with certain questions bearing on them. The pupils have to read the paragraphs and underline those words in the paragraphs that are answers to the questions. Dr. West has also framed similar tests suited to Indian pupils and their level of attainment. Thus, a teacher can, by such devices, train his pupils gradually in silent reading. This will form a preparation for the efficient silent reading of regular texts and non-detailed texts to be prescribed later. Yet the teacher in the lower standards should not allow his enthusiasm to run away with his discretion. It is rather difficult to train children in the lower standards to read silently. If the teacher finds that the pupils do not make much headway with their silent reading, he should create interest in the matter by reading it aloud, giving explanation here and there. Afterwards questions may be asked just to make them recollect what they have heard and read. Silent reading in the lower standards will thus be occasional, incidental and not form a regular feature in every textual lesson.

To sum up, silent reading can come only after oral reading, only after the training in articulation has fairly advanced, only after the mechanism of oral speech is gone through. Oral reading must be precedent to silent reading. Silent reading may be progressively resorted to from the fourth standard onwards.

Let us now consider the factors that silent reading involves. Of these speed and comprehension are both important. Mere speed without comprehension can be of no use. Reading is not mere recognition of the written symbols. It is an intellectual thought-getting activity. On the other hand, taking time to comprehend the meaning of every word retards speed. Both these factors are interdependent. You cannot read more than eight pages from Nunn in an hour whereas you can race through more than forty pages of a

novel in the same period. Comprehension, then, determines speed. If the subject-matter is in easy one you can read quickly. Conversely, paradoxical though it may appear, understanding is also influenced by speed. Speed, to some extent, helps comprehension. Slow reading comes in the way of proper, better thought-getting. When you read fast, the different ideas or thoughts, the scattered aspects, are brought together better and quicker. The closer the images, ideas or thoughts are brought together, the better the understanding. A test will prove the contention. Ask a boy to read a passage slowly and make him answer some relevant questions. Then ask him to read another passage of equal difficulty rapidly and answer questions on it. It will be found that reading rapidly has helped him to answer better than when he read slowly. Speed, therefore, can be taken as one of the aids to good comprehension. We cannot make a passage easier, we must take it as it is. But we can make pupils understand it better by rapid silent reading. Here we should note down and understand the term 'fixation'. 'Fixations' are those periods of pauses which we make or observe between the stopping and moving of the eye. While scanning a line we allow our eye to dwell on each word, be it ever for a fraction of a second, before proceeding to the next one, our eye hops, so to speak, from word to word. This interval between the stopping of the eye and the moving of it is termed 'fixation'. In slow reading there are longer fixations. In rapid reading the number and duration of fixations are and should be lessened. Pupils should be encouraged to pick up more words during the short space of each fixation. Proper training will achieve this desired object. If we can give them this training we shall have done by them a good thing.

Silent reading ought to be rapid reading. Words, of course, need not be pronounced, nor is it necessary to know

the meaning of every word. It is enough if we get at the central idea of a paragraph. We simply scan and skim through the matter. Unimportant words are skinned over. We take in a larger number of words at a glance and thus reduce the amount of time required for reading. This results in more speed. Comprehension need not suffer, for, as has already been stated, psychological tests have proved that there is a correlation between speed and comprehension. We can read fast and understand the matter well at the same time, rather we must read faster to understand better!

We can here note down where silent reading can be legitimately and effectively employed—(1) Recognition of words written on the blackboard and obeying the commands or directions exhibited on a placard. This is done in the first standard. (2) In a prose lesson in the higher standards—from standard fourth onwards—pupils may be given silent reading with objectives. The objectives are presented to the class which reads a passage silently to grasp its import and find out answers to them. Silent reading should be really silent and the class-room should not be filled with an audible buzz as each pupil reads aloud to himself. (3) Where extensive readers are set up in the class, silent reading is invariably employed. The teacher asks the class to read silently a particular portion from the book and gather answers to certain questions which he writes on the blackboard along with certain difficult words and their explanations. (See p 71-73, The conduct of Rapid reading in the class) After the silent reading answers to the questions are invited. Further questions other than the objectives may also be put to ascertain whether the pupils have understood the passage. In the case of rapid readers that have been recommended for reading at home or in the library silent reading, i. e., of course, employed. The teacher may ask pupils to read a whole chapter or two at home and questions may be asked

on the subject matter in class and pupils asked to give short summaries. The principle in silent reading is that pupils should proceed as fast as possible consistent with a proper understanding of the passage. It trains them in rapidly grasping the meaning of the printed page. Its value lies in serving as a transition step from the 'rapid' study of a text under the guidance of a teacher to reading without his assistance, which will be the kind of reading he is likely to pursue in adult life. (3) All library reading must be silent reading. The Library and the Reading Room ought to be characterized by a pervading atmosphere of scholarship and dignified silence. In the sanctified atmosphere of the library, noise of any kind is taboo and peace reigns supreme. Even the consultations with the librarian are carried on in a hushed undertone so as not to disturb the readers. Pupils must be trained to a strict observance of these rules. They should be made to realize that the library or a reading room is not a lounge or a Common Room and that the moment they put a step inside its precincts all conversation should freeze. The library is a place for silent reading and quiet meditative study and nothing should be suffered as is likely to desecrate its sanctity. (4) Reading for pleasure or relaxation is of the type of silent reading. Such reading does not constitute a task but is indulged in for the pleasure it yields. Novels, humorous works, magazines and newspapers are light reading and are read in silence perhaps in a favourite cosy chair or in the yielding softness of a bed. One wants to relax and loud reading at such a time will be jarring to the nerves. (5) Reading for knowledge. When one wants to gather knowledge or information he does so by reading several books on the subject in which he is interested. This type of reading is continued throughout life. It is the scholar's reading. All this reading is silent reading. (6) Reference reading. Reference reading is silent reading. On,

refers to dictionaries, encyclopedias, Year Books, anthologies, or other works. These are read in silence because the information that is sought is required for oneself and is not to be communicated to an audience. (7) In the Dilton Plan of study subject rooms or 'laboratories' replace the conventional classrooms. Each 'laboratory' is fitted up for the study of that particular subject and all books dealing with the subject are placed there. Pupils who have assignments to work out in any particular subject enter the subject room and gather information from the books therein provided. This reading is silent reading. Each pupil works at his own pace and might be reading a different book from that read by others. Oral reading by all is obviously not practicable. (8) In lessons organized on what is known as the 'supervised study' method the teacher distributes books or other material to his pupils and asks them to gather certain information from them on certain points provided by him. Pupils read these books and silently gather the required information. Or the teacher may divide his class into two or more groups and set a different task to each, himself supervising their activity in working it out. The reading incidental to the completion of this task must be silent reading. (9) All adult reading is of the silent reading type.

The advantages which silent reading offers over oral reading are (1) Silent reading is speedy reading. (2) It is also better reading. It enables better, quicker thought-getting. (3) In many situations, discussed above in library reading, reference reading, reading under the Dilton Plan or the Supervised Study method, etc.—silent reading is the only reading possible. (4) The most important advantage that it offers over oral reading is that it allows each child to go at its own pace. Recent experiments in psychology have shown that there are wide individual differences between different children as regards mental development. Different

pupils of the same age are at different stages of intellectual attainment. The Intelligent Quotient differs from child to child although of the same age. There is no such thing as an 'average' pupil. Psychology has exploded the idea. The disparity between the intellectual level of one child and another is also reflected in the matter of reading and understanding. In oral reading in the class, whether the teacher reads or the pupil, he is reading to the whole class and all the pupils must follow the reader simultaneously. But the powers of understanding are not developed equally in all the pupils. So, while the brighter pupils can follow easily, the less fortunate ones find themselves dragged along with the result that they fail to comprehend what is read. They would have appreciated more time to read the passage. Silent reading emancipates the duller child from the tyranny of unequal intellectual partnership with the brighter one in which he finds himself. In silent reading each child may take his own time. In this, silent reading provides for the measurable variation in the innate capacities of children.

How to conduct silent reading in class?

The conduct of silent reading in the class, if it is to yield the maximum of advantage, must not be allowed to degenerate into a haphazard affair. The pupils must be told what exactly they have to do and what is expected of them. The preparation for silent reading will include (i) telling the pupils the exact limits of what they are to read, (ii) writing down on the black board the explanation of the difficult words in the portion assigned, or alternately, the teacher may explain these to individual pupils while the silent reading is in progress, (iii) writing down the objectives framed on the portion on the black board and telling the pupils that they will be required to find out answers to them. After this much of 'preparation' the class proceeds with the silent reading. Reasonable time should be allotted, depending on

syntactic structure of its sentences. English grammar thus came to be modelled on Latin and Greek grammars and was given equal preponderance in schools.

Grammar, thus, continued to occupy an unassailable position for a very long time. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, educationists began to think that there was no sufficient argument for the importance attached to grammar in the old grammar schools. In 1881 Dr Henry Sweet sounded a loud note of protest by publishing a new edition of grammar which he defended by saying that the old grammar teachers had taken no note of the various changes that had taken place in the English language and that they still stuck to the old rules, mostly rendered obsolete, which depended on Latin and Greek languages and their grammars. But at that time even upto 1909, his cry remained a cry in the wilderness. Then a Committee of masters met and appointed a Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology presided over by that great philologist and grammarian Dr Sonnenschein. The immediate object of the Committee was "to secure uniformity of nomenclature, and by adopting a common grammatical terminology for all languages of the Indo-European family to bring English into touch with the languages to which it is historically akin, and make English grammar both more intelligible in itself and more useful in the progress of acquiring other languages." But as Dr Sonnenschein was a great Latin scholar, his bias for Latin was strongly reflected in his recommendations which were, therefore, not accepted *in toto*. Reference was made to the English Association to come to the rescue and make a few 'wise' recommendations. In 1919 a departmental committee was appointed by that body to investigate into the whole problem. The findings of the committee were —(1) that grammar is a necessary introduction to the study of a language (This is opposed to the

principles of the Direct Method.), (ii) that in the past grammar was wrongly taught because (a) its nature was misunderstood, (b) the influence of Latin still persisted, (c) the study of philology was in its infancy and hence not much was known of the structure of the language. Grammar cannot be a legislator and lay down rules. Modern grammar is not prescriptive but descriptive. (iii) that pure or functional or universal grammar must be taught first before any formal study of grammar is taken up. By functional grammar we mean the function which a word performs in a sentence without reckoning its form or endings.

There the matter rests for the present. Modern opinion accepts substantially the above recommendations as a basis for the teaching of grammar.

Some of the claims put forward on behalf of grammar examined.

It will be illuminating to examine from a scientific point of view some of the claims put forward by staunch supporters of grammar teaching. Some of these claims were (i) "that grammar has a utilitarian value in learning a language. It helps the pupil in oral and written composition, and to speak and write better." With this view grammar was emphasized at the expense of literature. The study of literature as such was merely incidental and all the time was devoted to the study of grammar and translation. Experiments which have been conducted go to prove that this contention has no solid foundation in facts. To one group language was taught through grammar, and to another group by the Direct Method, both under controlled conditions. Results were incontestably better in the case of the latter. Greening Lamborn gives another example. During the last Great War some of the London children were removed to Oxford. Some of them attended grammar schools, while others joined ordinary county schools. In a test it

the length and the nature of the passage, and on the nature and extent of the preparation with which the reading was prefaced by the teacher. Finding answers to the objectives, of course, now becomes the immediate aim of the silent reading. When all have completed their reading answers to the objectives should be elicited after which more detailed discussion of the passage should be entered upon. The teacher may enlarge upon some of the points and then round off the discussion by himself summarising the passage or demanding it of the pupils, preferably the latter, and leaving a 'tail' for the next lesson if the passage formed part of a continuous narrative. If the teacher desires his pupils to write down answers to certain questions bearing on the matter, such work should be set as home work rather than attempt it in the class as the latter course is likely to interfere with the main object of the lesson—that of reading silently a certain portion and grasping its purport. It need hardly be repeated here what has already been stated elsewhere that silent reading must really be silent and that individual pupils, if in need of some help from the teacher, should be assisted in such a way as not to disturb the rest of the class.

How to test silent reading?

Ability to furnish answers to the objectives and to take part in an informed discussion on the matter read is the test to determine the success or otherwise of the task assigned. Inability to answer questions may indicate either an unsuccessful yet honest attempt to grapple with the subject-matter or just brown study. In either case the remedy is to make the victim or the culprit, as the case may be, 'try again'. Let him refer to the subject-matter and attempt to locate the answer. The teacher's intrusion by way of providing the answer himself or by making other pupils do it is hardly helpful. The victim will never be

made to realise the value of self-effort and the self-confidence it generates and will thus form a permanent liability on the teacher, or it will put a premium on negligence if he is a marker.

Conclusion.

In summarising we may say that oral reading progressively diminishes as the pupil advances, that oral reading is indispensable for correct pronunciation and language learning in its early stages, and that for extensive reading, acquisition of knowledge, reading for pleasure, and rapid comprehension, silent reading is the obvious solution.

CHAPTER XV

THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

Introduction Grammar has always occupied a very dominant place in the study of languages, especially classical. In learning Sanskrit, for example, the place occupied by a very thorough study of grammar and the time devoted to it need no emphasis as many a student of Sanskrit will readily testify. In England the study of Latin and Greek was on the same footing as was the study of Sanskrit in India. The method adopted was the Translation-Grammar method. The study of those languages was approached through a study of their grammars. No wonder, then, that 'grammar' predominated all school curricula. Hence the existence of so many 'Grammar Schools' in England. Their very denominations are descriptive of their activity. It was through the study of the grammars of Latin and Greek that the English grammar gradually came to be defined and crystallized, for the English Language has always been growing, and borrowing from other languages and simplifying and

syntactic structure of its sentences. English grammar thus came to be modelled on Latin and Greek grammars and was given equal prepondence in schools.

Grammar, thus, continued to occupy an unassailable position for a very long time. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, educationists began to think that there was no sufficient argument for the importance attached to grammar in the old grammar schools. In 1881 Dr Henry Sweet sounded a loud note of protest by publishing a new edition of grammar which he defended by saying that the old grammar teachers had taken no note of the various changes that had taken place in the English language and that they still stuck to the old rules, mostly rendered obsolete, which depended on Latin and Greek languages and their grammar. But at that time even up to 1909, his cry remained a cry in the wilderness. Then a Committee of masters met and appointed a Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology presided over by that great philologist and grammarian Dr Sonnenschein. The immediate object of the Committee was "to secure uniformity of nomenclature, and by adopting a common grammatical terminology for all languages of the Indo-European family to bring English into touch with the languages to which it is historically akin, and make English grammar both more intelligible in itself and more useful in the progress of acquiring other languages." But as Dr Sonnenschein was a great Latin scholar, his bias for Latin was strongly reflected in his recommendations which were, therefore, not accepted *in toto*. Reference was made to the English Association to come to the rescue and make a few 'wise' recommendations. In 1919 a departmental committee was appointed by that body to investigate into the whole problem. The findings of the committee were —(1) that grammar is a necessary introduction to the study of a language (This is opposed to the

principles of the Direct Method), (ii) that in the past grammar was wrongly taught because (a) its nature was misunderstood, (b) the influence of Latin still persisted, (c) the study of philology was in its infancy and hence not much was known of the structure of the language. Grammar cannot be a legislator and lay down rules. Modern grammar is not prescriptive but descriptive (iii) that pure or functional or universal grammar must be taught first before any formal study of grammar is taken up. By functional grammar we mean the function which a word performs in a sentence without reckoning its form or endings.

Thus the matter rests for the present. Modern opinion accepts substantially the above recommendations as a basis for the teaching of grammar.

Some of the claims put forward on behalf of grammar examined

It will be illuminating to examine from a scientific point of view some of the claims put forward by staunch supporters of grammar teaching. Some of these claims were (1) 'that grammar has a utilitarian value in learning a language. It helps the pupil in oral and written composition, and to speak and write better.' With this view grammar was emphasized at the expense of literature. The study of literature as such was merely incidental and all the time was devoted to the study of grammar and translation. Experiments which have been conducted go to prove that this contention has no solid foundation in facts. In one group language was taught through grammar, and to another group by the Direct Method, both under controlled conditions. Results were incontestably better in the case of the latter. Greening Lamborn gives another example. During the last Great War some of the London children were removed to Oxford. Some of them attended grammar schools, while others joined ordinary county schools. In a test it

was revealed that the boys in the grammarless schools could write better English than those who attended the grammar schools. It is also interesting to note that a large percentage of boys from the Grammar Schools, after going back to London, forgot most of the grammar they had learnt and were none the worse for it. There were some Belgian children who were evacuated from Belgium and billeted in English homes. In little more than a year they came to speak as good an English as their English playmates though absolutely no grammar was taught to them. The implications of the above cases are clear. The knowledge of grammar has very little, if any, effect upon correct usage. Apparently imitation of correct expressions are far more efficacious and more lasting in effect in forming correct habits of expression than formal grammatical knowledge. Grammar might equip a man with critical judgment, finer points, and technical quibbles but it does not enable him to speak or write any the better. Often grammarians are very poor men of letters. The great American psychologist Hoyt has proved that the correlation between grammar and good composition is little, to wit, 3. Correct English and 'good' English are not necessarily synonymous. The elements of style, balance, rhythm, and diction, found in good English, are lacking in mere grammatical English. So, instead of learning by heart the several rules of Grammar, we had better acquire that unerring language sense by speaking and imitation. Any one who has acquired this unerring sense, albeit in varying degrees, can readily detect a fault in writing by the mere sound. Knowledge is one thing and its application quite another. The mere knowledge of grammatical rules is no guarantee against lapses into ungrammatical forms. Conversely the writer of good English exhibits his acquaintance with grammar though he is not aware of it. All of which goes to show that observation, imitation and practice are far

more important than mere formal grammar and that grammar has little relation to correct expression. The fallacy of the Renaissance school with its insistence upon formal grammar has been exposed. (11) Another argument put forward in support of grammar was that it has cultural and disciplinary values. The training in precision thinking and the passion for exactitude acquired in the study of grammar, they say, is a valuable gain, useful not only for the study of the language itself but for its transference value to other subjects as well. There are two fallacies underlying this claim. They say that the harder the subject the better is its disciplinary value. But even supposing that the study of a very difficult subject brings in its wake a certain amount of Teutonic thoroughness and a recasting of mental habits resulting in a more disciplined intellect, do the gains sufficiently outweigh the efforts expended to justify the imposition of difficult subjects upon young minds? Now-a-days we include a subject in the curriculum not because of its possible disciplinary value but for its social utility. Secondly, the Theory of Formal Training, or Formal Discipline, or Transfer of Training which lies at the back of the claim is now exploded. The theory supposed that thinking in one sphere of thought was the same as thinking in another, that mental process irrespective of the immediate field with which it happens to be occupied, is essentially the same, and that, therefore, if faculties could be trained through any one branch of knowledge there would automatically be a transference of this Training to other branches which would consequently benefit. Psychology now tells us that this theory is a product of mental aberration or, at best, wishful thinking. Whatever disciplinary value the study of grammar may have will lie not in the knowledge of the subject itself but in the process by which it

is handled and much less in its carry-over to other subjects. We can only disbelieve in its special, all embracing prerogatives.

The value of grammar teaching

Can we then entirely get rid of grammar? The Direct Methodists neglected grammar altogether. They studied the methods by which a child picks up its mother tongue. The child does not learn it by a study of its grammar but by imitation and reproduction of what happens in its surroundings. So they intended to place before the child good models to imitate, thus unconsciously imbibing the principles of grammar in the process. The study of grammar was thus only incidental. The pupils were trained in the art of correct expression through repetition and reproduction and not with reference to the principles of grammar.

But in the revolt against the tyranny of grammar we cannot go too far. We cannot entirely depose grammar from the very high pedestal it has occupied for so long a time. In the reaction that set in against the teaching of grammar there has been no systematic teaching of grammar, with the result that a good many teachers felt that the reaction had gone too far. They felt that if grammar proved a tyrannous master, there is no reason why it should not be a good servant if nothing more. We may not regard grammar as a useful training in thinking, and therefore valuable in itself but it can be a means to an end. The fact that grammar has been abused in the past by being made the instrument of the dullest mechanical drudgery cannot detract from its real value if rightly used. What we should know is that the treatment of grammar purely as a sort of mental gymnastics should be discouraged.

What then is the value of grammar teaching? The value of imitation and reproduction in learning a language

has already been noted. That is the Direct Method. But a complete success by this method presupposes an ideal condition in which the learner gets prolonged, unlimited opportunities to hear and reproduce the language he is learning. But our children, owing to the limited amount of time that is allotted to the subject of English, do not get sufficient opportunities of observing the English manner of speech and expression. The fault does not lie with the Direct Method which is based on sound psychological principles, it is rather the severe curtailment of opportunities afforded to the young learners that is responsible for the apparently indifferent results obtained. Grammar, therefore, should make good the deficiency. It should be made to supplement the learning process because the ideal conditions that are so essential a prerequisite to the complete success of the Direct method are impossible of reproduction in our class rooms. Collateral teaching of simple grammatical rules enables the pupils to avoid pitfalls of incorrect expressions and to secure reasonable accuracy. Grammar will thus help the formation of correct speech-habits by preventing errors. The value of knowing simple grammatical rules lies not in their knowledge as such but in their utility in serving as sign-posts to the unwary and the nervous traveller on the road to language learning.

Even supposing that ideal conditions demanded by the Direct Method prevail in our class-rooms a knowledge of grammar will be found helpful and reassuring. There are certain finer points which cannot be mastered without the help of grammar. Besides, nature's method of observation and imitation is much too slow for our liking and is essentially one of trial and error, involving an appreciable dissipation of energy. We want to short-circuit the process by eliminating as much as possible the pitfalls and thus accelerate the process of language learning. The writing of

English can be taught without a knowledge of grammar, but only at the expense of much patience and energy. Any teacher who has tried to improve the writing of English among pupils who have had no training in grammar at all will understand and appreciate the point.

There is, therefore, no difference of opinion as to the usefulness of grammar-teaching as a necessary adjunct to language-learning, securing as it does guidance, accuracy and speed in the bargain.

What grammar is to be taught?

It should, at the outset, be made clear that since we are dealing with the teaching of English, naturally it will be the English grammar that must be taught. But so obvious a fact is apt to be lost sight of. The influence of Latin on English and English grammar was very great in the 15th and 16th centuries. Latin was regarded as an ideal language, with all the authority and majesty of the Church behind it, and scholars vied with one another in their aspiration to master it. Latin grammar was imposed upon English grammar which was consequently modelled on the former. But later on it was found that though English descended from the Indo-European languages, the gulf between English and Latin was steadily widening. Latin is a dead language as opposed to English which is a living one and which is constantly growing with all the characteristics of vigour and vitality attendant upon a living and growing organism. Secondly, the vocabulary in Latin is limited whereas that in English is very large and is still growing. Thirdly, the inflexional endings in Latin to denote syntactical relations show that it is a synthetic language whereas English is tending to become more and more analytic. Fourthly, word-order is unimportant in Latin because wherever the word might be, its ending shows its relation to other words in the sentence. But in English word-order is

of importance because of its analytical nature. The important inference from all these differences is that English grammar is quite independent of Latin grammar and that no attempt should be made to seek out resemblances, real or supposed, between the two.

Another thing to remember in connection with English grammar, indeed with grammars of all modern, living languages, is that there can be no such thing as finality with regard to it. Owing to the speed and the extent of changes which modern languages have undergone, the old grammatical categories have become obsolete in most cases and no longer correspond with permanent logical categories. There is, therefore, quite a strong case for a reconstruction of our grammatical notions. "English grammar is to be represented not as a set of dogmatic precepts, according to which, certain things are absolutely correct and others absolutely wrong, but as something living and developing under continual fluctuations and undulations, something that is founded on the past and prepares the way to the future, something that is not always consistent and perfect, but progressing and perfectible—in one word, human." "English is becoming a world language which is being taught in the schools of well nigh every civilized nation, and therefore English must not be tied down to a system of grammar which does not recognize to the full the fundamental facts of its structure or make allowance for the inevitable variations experienced from time to time." Grammar should not prescribe what people ought to speak, it should simply state, as a matter of fact, how a certain people do actually speak. It should not lead speech, it should simply follow it. It is not a list of immutable rules imposed by orthodox grammarians, but is a simple record of the phenomena of language as it is observed to exist. If a certain community habitually uses certain forms in a certain age, these form part of the

grammar of that community in that age. What is vulgarism or ungrammatical in one age may not be so in another. Usages may differ in different ages. "Grammatical propriety is nothing more than the established usage of a particular body of speakers at a particular time in their history. The correct usage, therefore, is not fixed for all time, and the function of grammar is merely to describe the main characteristics of current usage." In so far as the teacher deals with English grammar, he is urged, "to keep abreast of modern linguistic and grammatical research and, in his lessons, confine himself to the simplest and most elementary phases of the subject" (The English Association Pamphlet No. 56, "The Problem of Grammar").

Under these circumstances it is better and much safer to introduce pupils to what is called 'Pure Grammar,'—those vital and essential points of grammar common to all languages and without which neither the structure of sentences nor the functions of words can be understood. There is much that is common in the structure of languages. The subject-predicate relation, for instance, is a common feature. Thought, it has been said, 'marches to the rhythm of subject and predicate, the foot that is planted on the ground representing the subject and the foot that is moving forward in the air the predicate' (Ballard, *Thought and Language*). Similarly, if we study the work done by words in a sentence we discover that all the different functions discharged by different kinds of words can be classified under a few 'parts of speech'. Again, the agreement between the subject and predicate, the time—sense represented by 'tenses', the different types of sentences—positive, negative, question, command, etc.—are linguistic phenomena common to all languages, though details may differ from language to language.

It is, therefore, this *general* grammar or *pure* grammar that we must teach in our schools. The broad outline or

the 'anatomy' of the language should be laid bare before the pupils. The function of words in a sentence should be explained. The actual form that the word takes or the modifications it undergoes need not be given undue importance. "The grammar taught in our schools should be a grammar of function, not of form." (Board of Education, *The Teaching of English in England*.) It should describe the structure of language and do nothing more. It should be 'a description of the main laws of the structure of a language couched in terms which are sufficiently precise' (Jagger, *Modern English*.) In other words it is a 'map' of the whole language.

To sum up, no alien system of grammar should be imposed upon a linguistic framework which is entirely different from it, allowances must be made for the modifications which a living language is bound to undergo, and grammatical notions revised so as to be in conformity with them, and pure or functional grammar should be taught with just the requisite reference to the forms or syntactical relations peculiar to the particular language studied.

How much of grammar should be taught —

We now come to a consideration of the actual subject-matter to be taught. Here we must distinguish between a grammarian's study of grammar and a schoolboy's. "The grammarian studies the subject for its own sake, as an independent pursuit of knowledge, the schoolboy studies it for the light it throws on sentence types, and only in so far as it does so. That is, while the grammarian's aim is scientific, the schoolboy's is mainly utilitarian." The teacher's aim in teaching English to his pupils is to enable them to understand, speak, read, and write English. It, therefore, follows that only that part of grammar should be included in the curriculum as will help in realizing this aim and any part that does not so help should be eschewed. Judged by

this criterion much of the traditional grammar may be discarded as needless erudition. Macnee would discard "a large number of technical terms borrowed from Latin and Greek, with which English grammars are cumbered, as for example, *ablative case, gerundial infinitive*." "The distinction between the gerund and the verbal noun is unnecessary and even the term *gerund* may be eliminated." Similarly, moods can be left alone. These are only a few examples.

We have noted above that only *pure* grammar should be taught, i. e. those general principles that underlie every language. These resolve into (i) the structure of the sentence—subject and predicate, (ii) the different parts of speech and their functions, and (iii) other useful grammar such as the study of idiomatic constructions, use of appropriate prepositions, direct and indirect speech, sequence of tense, agreement of subject and predicate, etc. The unit of language is the sentence, not the word, and hence the starting point will be the sentence. It is only by considering the structure of a sentence that the functions of the constituent words will be understood. The division of a sentence into subject, predicate, object or complement will be found easy. The structure of a complex sentence should then be studied—the principal and subordinate clauses and the nature of the function of each clause. Pupils should be given the notion that a group of words can have the same function as a noun, adjective or adverb and that sometimes such a group is a clause. This presupposes a workable knowledge of the functions of nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions etc. If the pupil is able to pick up the principal and the subordinate clauses, and determine what kinds of clauses they are by looking at their function in a sentence that is enough. The essential thing is the realization of the function of words in a sentence. The utilitarian value of a knowledge of clause analysis is

that pupils are enabled to frame sentences correctly themselves. Tabular analysis need not be insisted upon if only for the disproportionately long time it involves. The knowledge of the structure of a sentence with its subdivisions and their functions is enough. It should be remembered that any form of analysis that is adopted should be one that can be used higher in the school, one that can be easily elaborated.

"The parts of speech are the eight divisions into which all the thousands of words of the English language can be classified." These different parts of speech are classified solely by the functions they perform in the sentence. The same word may have different functions in different sentences. Some of the parts of speech are further subdivided. A knowledge of the parts of speech and their subdivisions helps the pupil to gauge the exact sense in which he is going to use a word and to know beforehand the contribution it is going to make towards the sense of the sentence as a whole. Much loose use of words, resulting in ambiguity, is thus avoided. "The object of teaching grammar is to make the pupil think scientifically of language."

For the benefit of those teachers who feel the need of a guidance in distributing the subject-matter of grammar over the different standards containing different age groups, the following syllabus in grammar is suggested :

First Year. Only incidental grammar teaching. The Sentence. Subject and predicate (analysis in the 'box' form—the 'who' box and the 'do' box). Small and capital letters. Full stop and question mark. Negative sentence. Agreement of subject and predicate. Singular and plural, regular and irregular. Use of forms of 'to be', 'to have'. Use of adjectives. Use of simple present, present imperfect, past, past imperfect, and future tenses.

Second Year. Revision of tenses or other work done

in the preceding year. Analysis continued. The following parts of speech only—noun, pronoun, adjective, verb and adverb. Practice in changing of tenses. Formal notion of present, past and future tenses. Use of present perfect and past perfect. Use of degrees of comparison. Picking out objects of transitive verbs. Division of nouns into proper nouns, common nouns and abstract nouns. Comma and the sign of exclamation. Use of active and passive voice.

Third Year. Conjunction, preposition and interjection. Revision of all tenses; changing of tenses. Formal notion of the function of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and conjunctions in a sentence. Kinds of pronouns. Kinds of adjectives. Kinds of adverbs. Analysis (excepting clause-analysis). Formal notion of person: first, second and third. Formal notion of number: singular and plural.

Fourth Year. Gender: masculine, feminine, common and neuter. Verbs: transitive and intransitive. Fuller notion of voice: active and passive. Complement. Relative pronouns and relative adverbs. Use of 'shall', 'will', and 'must'. Analysis of simple sentences. Marks of punctuation: question mark, colon. Types of sentences: positive, negative, question, command, exclamation. Types of sentences: simple and complex.

Fifth year. Detailed study of the subdivisions of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. Articles: definite and indefinite. Verbs: finite and infinite. Semicolon, dash, and hyphen: Clause analysis: adjectival and adverbial, of compound and complex sentences. The infinitive. Idiomatic usages: appropriate prepositions. Direct and indirect speech.

Sixth year. Analysis continued: noun, adjectival and adverbial clauses of all description, simple, complex and compound sentences. Transformation of sentences. Synthesis of sentences. Sequence of tense. Appropriate prepositions. Direct and indirect speech. Beginnings of etymology: primary

and secondary derivatives, simple prefixes and suffixes (noun, adjectival, verb, adverbial, diminutive). Beginning of figures of speech: simile, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia, transferred epithet, personification, interrogation, exclamation, apostrophe. Punctuation.

Seventh year. Analysis. Synthesis. Direct and indirect. Appropriate propositions. Idiomatic usages: synonyms and antonym-, words similar in pronunciation but with different meanings; sequence of tense. Prefixes and suffixes. Figures of speech: metonymy, synecdoche, litotes, irony, pun, hyperbole, periphrases, inuendo, epigram, paradox, oxymoron, euphemism, climax, anticlimax, antithesis, tautology. Punctuation.

It will be noticed that formal parsing has been omitted from the above scheme. Parsing in the old mechanical way is a waste of time. It is enough that the pupils know all about the word as it is used in a sentence; they need not spend time in writing out these particulars about every word. Still, if there are some teachers who think they must sort of 'round off' the study of grammar by a formal 'judicial examination' of each word in a sentence, parsing may be attempted at the end of the third year. Much of the contents apportioned to the sixth and the seventh years has been dictated by the requirements of the Matriculation examination. An equitable division of the Matriculation syllabus has been effected between these two standards. The same consideration has necessitated the inclusion of historical grammar within the scheme for these standards. Historical grammar (a knowledge of the prefixes and suffixes, and of the origin and history of a word, whether derived from French, Latin, Greek or Anglo-saxon) ought properly to belong to the post-matriculation stage. But its inclusion in the Matriculation syllabus leaves no choice. Of course one cannot question the utility of a knowledge of this side of a language. It acquaints us with the 'engineering' behind

each word and tells us much about word-building and word-change, revealing something of the sources of the vocabulary. A teacher who is possessed of adequate knowledge will be able to interest his pupils in the derivation and history of words. This will facilitate the exact knowledge and appreciation of the fullness of meaning which lies in the word. It also helps to understand why a writer used a particular word and, as such, contributes to an intelligent appreciation of literature.

How to teach grammar the procedure

Before turning to a detailed consideration of the exact procedure to be adopted in the teaching of English grammar it will be useful to make note of one or two facts in connection with it. The first of these is that constant reference to the vernacular grammar should be made. Much of the ground to be covered in English grammar will already have been covered in vernacular grammar and reference to the parallel topic in vernacular grammar will not only make it more intelligible and in a shorter time than would otherwise be the case, but will also enable the pupil to realize that there are certain essential grammatical notions or categories common to the two languages. English grammar or 'pure' grammar cannot be taught in a vacuum. It is very desirable to lay the foundations in the mother-tongue. It will often be a sheer waste of time to teach laboriously some point in English grammar as though it is entirely new, when a reference to vernacular grammar might make the point perfectly clear to the class." Yet some teachers when teaching English grammar indulge in much beating about the bush, religiously avoiding any reference to the parallel topic in vernacular grammar, no doubt under the mistaken notion that to do so will be against the 'method' and that it will be frowned upon by the 'Inspector.' Still others want to demonstrate their ability and skill in

imparting English grammar to their pupils without any reference to vernacular grammar and thus make it a point of their individual reputation as 'able' teachers who can conduct 'highly successful' lessons. All very ridiculous, of course, considering the waste of time involved. To those who always have the 'Inspector' at the back of their mind, it will come reassuring to learn that no Inspector will ever brand them as incompetent teachers because of their recourse to vernacular grammar. The important point that emerges from this discussion is that the teaching of vernacular grammar on sound lines is an essential preliminary to the teaching of English grammar.

Secondly, in the earlier stages there will be no formal teaching of grammar. Here much of the grammar taught is acquired unconsciously (by imitation). This is done in connexion with oral work and reading and composition lessons. The pupils learn the correct grammatical usage by imitation. And he shows his knowledge of grammar by speaking grammatically correct sentences. Whatever grammar is absorbed at this stage is incorporated in the correct usage and 'remains unformulated'. It is enough if the pupils learn to know that particular forms of expressions are correct and that others are incorrect because 'it is never said like that.' They should not be made to account for errors, at any rate in the very earliest stage. The use of correct usage or expression represents 'grammar in action'. Formal grammar is an abstract science and will, therefore, not be intelligible to the young learners. As Ballard says, "... it requires more mature intelligence to grasp the grammar than to learn the language itself."

The teacher, therefore, will keep before the pupils (whether in reading or in oral work or in written work) such type of material (usage, construction, or language forms) as represent examples of grammatical points he wishes

to drill. The choice of suitable, graded readers is, therefore, very important. Pupils are imitative and the intensive reading of the text, questions and answers and oral exercises based on it, will result in the unconscious absorption of considerable amount of grammar. If faced with an unsuitable reader, the teacher may select suitable material from other books or himself devise it to illustrate the usage or usages he wants to drill. What should be noted is that pupils, during the first three years, should be acquainted with the main grammatical usages though they may not know how to describe them or account for them. The formal explanation and classification of the grammatical phenomena will come later.

As opposed to the unconscious acquisition of grammar (by imitation) in the three lower standards, the conscious or systematic study of grammar (by observation and definition) should begin from the fourth standard. Analysis, direct and indirect narration, punctuation, the sequence of tenses, synthesis, idiomatic usages, etc. are now seriously studied. The value of this knowledge to the pupil's efforts in composition is undoubtedly real, though of a contributory nature. Grammar teaching from now on cannot afford to be merely 'incidental', and a considerable amount of conscious practice will be necessary. Whereas formerly grammatical practice was coincidental with reading and composition lessons, special periods must now be set aside for grammar, the study of which becomes increasingly elaborate.

We now come to the question of definitions. There should be no stress on definitions indeed, definitions of parts of speech, subject or predicate should, in no case, be taught or provided in the lower standards because the pupils at this stage are not mature enough to understand them. If at all they are considered necessary, they should be statements, in the words of the pupil himself, of the functions of a word

as discovered by him after a study of numerous examples. Besides, definitions, being statements of functions performed by different kinds of words, are not immutable. The English language is a growing thing and some of the old forms or functions undergo a change or become obsolete.

As regards terminology, the one, at present in general acceptance is, that recommended in the Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology. So it the reader is referred for details. The Report fully recognizes the advantages of a common terminology for all languages. The teacher of English, whenever dealing with a grammatical term, will frequently refer to the corresponding term in vernacular Grammar. Besides saving time and energy, this practice will contribute to a better and firmer assimilation of the matter. Even if usage and grammatical terms differ with the two languages, a study of the two placed side by side will be found illuminating. This comparative study is fruitful in disclosing to the pupil the resemblances or dissimilarities between the two languages.

While the teacher is dealing with terminology, he should limit it to the actual or empirical requirements and not confront the pupil with the whole outline of grammar or a logically complete array of grammatical terms. Only those terms that satisfy the immediate requirements in describing the particular usages already learnt should be introduced. The acquisition of a terminology takes time and it is useless to burden a pupil with terms which he is not likely to require.

There are two methods which can be employed in teaching English grammar, as in fact very many subjects. These are the *Inductive Method* and the *Deductive Method*. Let us examine each.

The Inductive method The pupil is given numerous

examples and from the data examined generalises certain conclusions and formulates a rule

The Deductive Method The pupil starts with the rule and applies it to particular examples

The inductive method was first popularised by Bacon. By examining a fairly extensive data a common characteristic is isolated, then classified and a universal rule is established. This is the method used in teaching science where the pupil is encouraged to draw his own conclusions from examples placed before him. The advantages of the inductive method are many. As far as possible the pupil should be encouraged to discover the rule for himself, for his joy is then greater. "Never rob the child of sacred right of discovery"—Pestalozzi. The pupil is thrilled by the joy of discovery or *heuristic*. A very valuable sense of self-confidence is also generated when the pupil finds his efforts reaching a successful completion. Secondly, the process of discovering the thing for himself is a potent stimulus to further efforts. He is always on the alert not only throughout the lesson but also for further possibilities in other directions. He virtually becomes his own teacher.

Grammar is an abstract science and as such is better understood by an analysis of particulars. Children, and for that matter we adults too, love to think in terms of what is concrete. Psychology, if only the principles are discussed, becomes so difficult to understand, but it becomes a pleasurable reading if numerous illustrations are provided. The inductive method, involving as it does the study of concrete examples, presents grammar in a concrete way. We pass from what is concrete or tangible (the illustrations) to what is abstract or intangible (the abstract rule). This is as it should be.

In the deductive method we start from the rule and proceed to apply it to particular examples. The process is

reversed from that in the inductive method. Here the transition is from abstract to concrete. The pupils have nothing tangible to anchor it in the beginning and consequently founder hopelessly. The attempts to bring individual instances within the purview of an already formulated rule involve much of trial and error and elimination with disastrous effects upon the self-confidence of the pupils. The deductive method is logical rather than psychological, the method of the accomplished scholar, of the finished artist rather than of the young learner, the method eminently suited to one who is already in possession of all facts properly indexed and seeks to apply his knowledge to advantage, rather than to one who is a novice, and has just started his 'fruit-gathering'.

And yet, divergent as the two methods are, we can profitably combine them for our purpose. Let the pupil start inductively, study and analyse the material before him and arrive at a certain conclusion. When he is in possession of the general rule which, it is important to remember, he himself has arrived at, let him proceed to apply the rule to further examples and verify its general applicability. Taken by itself, each method is found to be imperfect. Even if the inductive method helps us to discover certain facts, the knowledge thus acquired must be applied deductively by way of practice to prevent its lapse into oblivion. Application of the rule or definition helps to fix it into the mind.

The method which we should adopt is a profitable mixture of the two methods examined above and combines the advantages of both. It is inductive upto a certain point (until the generalization is reached after analysing the data) and then becomes deductive (in applying the rule to specific instances). In the absence of a better name we may as well term it the inducto-deductive method.

Where the subject matter to be taught is new to the

pupils the inducto-deductive method must be employed. But where a preliminary knowledge of it can be assumed because of the ground having been covered in vernacular grammar, the purely deductive method can be resorted to, and there will be no point in arriving inductively at the general rule which the pupils know already. The notions of subject, predicate, noun, adjective etc., for example, can be treated deductively. The pupils, their previous knowledge and the type of subject-matter will, of course, in the end guide the teacher in his selection of any particular method.

It must, however, be remembered that the illustrative material (examples) both in the inductive and the deductive stages must be copious. Besides the danger of inaccuracy, or inadequacy attendant upon generalisation from insufficient data, the pupils are liable to become habituated to hasty conclusions, not infrequently erroneous. Numerous examples, therefore, must be provided to be analysed. This concreteness in a great measure must be a cardinal feature of our grammar teaching. Wherever possible the examples must invariably be drawn from the pupil's reading material. This correlation between grammar and literature will react in a way mutually beneficial. It is also advocated that the illustrations shall, as far as possible, be from 'standard' authors in the hope that 'good' English will in this way find its way to their linguistic equipment or capital. This drawing upon standard works of literature, however, will not always be found feasible, and will, at any rate, be limited to the higher standards. As far as the lower standards are concerned the teacher will have largely to fall back upon the class readers. Fortunately some of the modern series lend themselves eminently to this purpose and whereas the teacher in former days had very often to invent his illustrations, his modern counterpart is provided with suitable and well graded material. Further, the illustrative material

should be such as to form when taken as a whole an intelligible, connected narrative. Nothing is less interesting to the pupils than to be made to read isolated sentences having no earthly connection between one another. Such disconnected sentences are the de par of the pupils who cannot divest themselves of the sense that there is something very unreal in all what is going on in the class. If there is no story or a connected narrative in the reader that will lend itself to the purpose in his view, the teacher should proceed to compose one. The connected narrative not only makes for more sense and meaning to the child, and hence to greater interest on his part, but also to a better understanding and fixation. In the lower standards especially stray or unconnected sentences for illustration should never be selected.

As with the illustrative material in the inductive stage so with the sentences for practice in the deductive stage—there should be plenty of material. It is not enough that the pupil has arrived at a grammatical rule. There must be the application of that rule. In a sense the second process (of application) is of even more importance than the first. Practice alone makes a man perfect. Application is a matter of skill which is obtained through constant practice. The result of constant practice is the formation of habit which becomes second nature with man. It is through habit that the unerring language sense is acquired. If once the pupil acquires this language sense he can later afford to forget the rules. Hence the importance of sufficient practice in the application of rules of grammar cannot be overestimated. Oral practice will be found very useful and should precede written practice. We can do twice the work orally as in writing in the same amount of time. Besides, corrections can be made then and there. As a boy speaks so he writes hence the importance of oral work.

The plan of a typical grammar lesson would be somewhat of the following nature

- I *Preparation* Presentation of numerous examples—about 8 to 10, preferably 10 co-ordinated sentences, the material, as far as possible, being selected from the reader
- II *Presentation* (a) The teacher asks the pupils to study the examples and draws their attention to some dominant characteristic common to each
- (b) The dominant characteristic is noted and inference drawn by studying each example separately and comparing it with others. The pupils are invited to write down the generalization or rule. The teacher may recast it but if it describes the grammatical phenomenon just noted tolerably accurately, it is better to allow it to stand as it is.
- III *Application* (a) A good deal of oral practice involving the application and verification of the rule just 'discovered'. The material for practice may be provided by the teacher and the pupils may be invited to construct sentences exemplifying the operation of the rule
- (b) Written exercises to be solved in the class.
- IV *Assignment* Some typical exercises to be set by way of homework (or alternatively pupils may be asked to hunt out similar examples from their reader or any other book.)

Exercises in grammar can take various forms,—transformation exercises, the 'do as directed' type, unmatched

exercise, or the 'fill in the gaps' type—the great standardly of the teacher. Whatever the form the exercises take they must fulfil the aim for which they are set—to provide practice—and as such must have a direct bearing on the subject-matter. Exercises, broadly speaking, can be divided into two classes, the one set for instructional purposes, and the other for remedial purposes where the pupil is required to remove some deliberate error. Exercises of the first class are meant for drilling while those of the second class test the ability to apply the knowledge. It should, however, be noted here that whereas drilling exercises are suitable for all standards, the 'remedial' exercises should rarely be set in the lower standards. There is no formal teaching of grammar in the lower standards where we rely on pupils hearing and practising correct usages for the most part. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should never give any opportunity to the pupils of learning or reading what is manifestly incorrect. Hence, the deliberate presentation of incorrect forms, although with the avowed purpose of getting them corrected, should be avoided. This class of exercises should be reserved for the higher stage where the pupils are possessed of a sufficiently mature intellect to distinguish between the correct and the incorrect forms, and will be in no danger of lapsing into the latter. Lastly, no reasons for their answers should be expected of pupils in the lower standards. It is enough if they use the correct forms. The practical application of a rule on the part of the pupils ought to satisfy us. The actual statement of the rule by them is unnecessary.

Use of text-books in the teaching of grammar

Should we use text books in the teaching of grammar, and if so, what books and at what stage? In the three lower standards it is very difficult to use a text-book in grammar because the pupils have no formal notion of

grammar and most of the text-books though 'specially prepared for use in the lower standards' still indulge in the logical arrangement with definitions and rigid classification of grammatical phenomena. The pupils find it difficult to understand them. Besides, the chief objection against them is that the illustrative material in them is not related to the reading material in the pupils' readers which, we must expect, must differ from school to school. We want to concentrate on the reader and to dig in it for whatever illustrations we require. Most of the illustrations in the grammar books, again, are stray, unconnected sentences not calculated to hold any interest for the pupils for whom they are intended.

'Grammar in the lower standards is more the concern of the teacher than the pupil.' It is his work to make a study of grammar and progressively grade the subject-matter and arrange it for orderly presentation. The teacher should decide what points of grammar he wishes to teach or drill and choose his illustrative material from the pupils' reader. If the reader does not lend itself to this purpose to his liking he should devise his own illustrations.

But later on the need for a suitable text book in grammar is increasingly felt. In the lower standards the pupils, by *perking* and *writing* the correct usages, are unconsciously following grammar. Their grammar is 'operational' grammar. There is no systematic classification of grammatical phenomena which awaits the higher stages. As the pupil progresses grammar teaching is no longer incidental but tends to become more and more complete. If the practice followed in the lower standards—study of numerous examples followed by intensive drilling—is continued into the higher standards, it will in effect amount to pupils writing a text book in grammar under the guidance of their teacher. This is hardly practicable if only for the enormous amount of time it would consume, time which could more profitably be

devoted to other branches of English study. The pupils in the higher stages are sufficiently advanced to understand the logical classification of grammatical facts which any text-book in grammar must embody. Besides, 'merely as a record of what has been learnt the printed page has greater appeal than what will laboriously be compiled by the pupil, with the additional advantages of neatness, compactness, clarity and wealth of material. The text-book is always there for ready reference. Most of the good text-books now follow the inducto-deductive plan—study of examples, generalization and application. The number of exercises provided is also varied and large. Any text-book which follows the orthodox plan (starting from the definition and giving a complete logical outline of grammar) must be avoided.

Though the ideal aimed at by the teacher should be to go on by himself and correlate grammar teaching with the pupil's reading material, it is not always possible to achieve it because not every grammar teacher has the time at his disposal for the selection of the necessary material or the energy to do it. The writer of a good text-book of grammar has already done the work for him and far more efficiently and thoroughly. In the use of the text-book, however, he should follow the inducto-deductive plan advocated above. Most of the modern text-books incorporate this plan, so there should be no difficulty on that score. A good teacher will, however, in addition to the material for practice provided in the text-book, make frequent cross references to parallel illustrations in the pupil's reading material.

Though the teacher may, in order to widen his horizon and elaborate his own knowledge, refer to more than one text book, it is always advisable to stick to any one book in the classroom. The advantage of all pupils possessing the same book is that it obviates the necessity of writing the material on the black board. The teacher simply has to

refer the pupils to particular examples on a particular page. If the pupils possessed different text-books, there is bound to be confusion and pupils will have to take down all the examples, to be solved either in the class or at home, the very thing which the possession of a text book is meant to obviate. It is also important to see that every pupil possesses a text-book. It is only then that the maximum advantage of possessing a text-book can be secured. A pupil who has no text-book will be severely handicapped, as he will be possessing neither the textbook with its attendant advantages nor a written record of all the classification of grammatical phenomena—a thing which a text book is supposed to remedy.

Some books on grammar recommended —

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| (1) George Sampson | Cambridge Lessons in English, Books I-IV (very good and on modern lines) |
| (2) Series by Tipping | (i) First English Grammar
(ii) Middle School Grammar
(iii) High School English Grammar |
| (3) Series of Grammars by Wren | Graded but somewhat on old-fashioned lines. Still useful |
| (4) Series by French | (Ox Uni Press) (Good) |
| (5) Macnee | A simple English Grammar (Good) |

The teacher is referred to Sonnenschein's *New English Grammar* (Clarendon Press) and *Soul of Grammar*

Though for the sake of convenience the subject of grammar teaching is here treated under a separate heading "it must not be forgotten that the various branches of English teaching are but means to an end, and that in attempt to regard the writing of English, or the study of Grammar as something which can be isolated from the reading and appreciation of English literature is a mistake and will lead to disaster"

CHAPTER XVI

THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

Introduction : Every year the Board of Examiners for the Matriculation examination report that the study of English of the average candidate is very poor indeed. He is unable to compose a paragraph in English without committing at least half a dozen mistakes of construction and idiom, let alone the elegance of style or marshalling of facts and arguments. Some who have inquired into this state of affairs suggest the teaching of grammar systematically as a remedy. The remedy has been tried but has not proved to be the panacea hoped for. The root of the trouble lies in the neglect of composition. There has been no systematic teaching of composition possibly because its very function has been very imperfectly understood. Very often only one or two periods a week are assigned to composition and even these are sometimes utilized for the study of the overpresent 'text'. Whatever composition is attempted is very dull and stereotyped, the teacher setting a theme and the students scribbling. No wonder the pupils' 'compositions' fail to reach the standard which is expected of them.

Wherein, then, lies the trouble? The psychology of language-learning tells us that the learning process has two aspects, the active aspect and the passive aspect. In order that the learner may acquire mastery over the language he is learning it is essential that he passes through both these stages—both these aspects—of language—learning. He learns the language as is taught to him by hearing, reading etc. This is the passive aspect. He is passively acquiring the language, trying to understand it, trying to relate the words to their sense. But this passive aspect alone will not carry him far. If he must master what he is learning he must put it to use. He must use it actively. This is the

active aspect of language—learning, or, as it is sometimes called, the expressive aspect. This he does in composition. After all, a language is not merely for understanding something through its medium, it is also for expressing what you mean through the same medium. This active use of the language will not only generate self-confidence in its use but will also make for a certain facility and elegance in its use acquired by practice. In the past, this active aspect has been sadly neglected. We have been attending only to the passive aspect. It was considered enough if the pupil understood the texts. No very great attention was paid to whether he could express himself with facility through the new medium. The teacher concentrated on the 'text' and had no interest in 'composition'. The teacher infected his pupils with the same attitude of indifference. They received no encouragement from the only quarter from which they could expect it, namely, the teacher. That was probably because he did not know what he was expected to do. He did not understand the nature of composition.

The Nature or Psychology of Composition —

Before turning to the object or aim of composition it will be fruitful to inquire into the psychology of composition, for without its knowledge the teacher will find his best efforts rewarded with only indifferent response. Composition is a form of self-expression. It is the expression of the child's thoughts. They are *his* thoughts. The word '*his*' is important because in all composition sincerity is vital. It is no use writing other's thoughts. It is like our hands and feet and other limbs taking orders from another's brain with the consequence that all the resulting movements will be shuffling awkward, ungainly. They will lack the balance, the rhythm, the coherence that attend all spontaneous action. We must develop this spontaneity of self-expression in our pupils. How can we create in them this spontaneous desire

to say something, this *portaneous* desire for self-expression? It can be done in two ways, both of which are essential if a successful composition is to result. Firstly, we must provide the situation. A person communicates to another his thoughts regarding or arising out of any particular situation. It is only when he finds himself in a situation that he feels some urge in him to communicate his thoughts to others. He cannot have any thoughts to communicate regarding just 'nothing'. Unless, therefore, he has a situation he will feel no urge to talk to others or write to others. If this is true with the adults how much more must it be with the children who are learning to speak and write in a language which is foreign to them! Secondly, we must provide an audience, a proper stimulating audience, a society whom the child really feels to move with. All the persons with whom we speak and to whom we communicate our thoughts constitute our *audience*. We do not go and talk to trees or stones or those who are perfect strangers to us. Each one of us has got a particular audience. Deprived of this particular audience, our communicative urge almost wids away. The children also will feel the urge to communicate only if a proper audience is secured to animate their thoughts. The proper audience for a child will be the sort of other children and other adults with whom he finds himself associating every day in a variety of situations. We have, thus, seen that both situations and an audience are required if the speaker is to feel an inner urge to be communicative. He must have somebody in view—and thus 'somebody' must be someone who lies within the ken of his experience—to talk to or to write to and he must have some occasion to talk about or write about. In the absence of these two prerequisites there will be no real inner urge. There will only be idle verbiage and literary insincerity. Dr Bolloc says that for a statement to be successful four things are essential,—(1)

The sayer, (2) The sayee (i.e. the audience), (3) The situation, and (4) The covenant (i.e. a code or a language). Our pupils are 'the sayer', they have 'the covenant', what we should provide them with are the remaining two factors, the situation and 'the sayee' or the audience. But this audience should be such that the child must feel that he is writing for the society which he likes or which he thinks worth while to write for. A child will not like to write for a teacher, he will like it still less if he finds that he is asked to write for no one. We find teachers coming into the class and almost ordering the boys "Well, boys, to day you are going to write an essay on what-is-its-name", or "write a letter to so and so about tweedledom and tweedledee". The boys wonder why on earth must they be bothered with this senseless thing and for whom. The result is that no boy feels any real urge or enthusiasm for the task, for a 'task' it is and their writings are nothing better than insincere scribbling.

Besides providing the situation and the audience we must also make an appeal to certain of the instincts with which a child is endowed. If we succeed in tapping this latent energy, the child will not be satisfied until he has expressed himself. What are these instincts? Firstly, there is the *social* or *gregarious instinct* by which one feels that one should share one's experience with others. These 'others' do not include the whole of humanity but that very limited part of humanity with which one, at any one particular age, comes in close touch. In the child's case his class-mates will constitute such an audience. Often pupils are advised to imitate great authors like Addison, Macaulay, Lamb, Stevenson and others. But these great writers had definite audiences in view when they wrote which our pupils cannot possibly have. It is futile to urge our pupils at their stage of life to follow these. However, a little may be accompli-

shal in this direction if an appeal is made successfully to the *instinct of imitation*. If we occasionally present to them good models and lead them to appreciate how great masters of style have expressed the same ideas in a vastly superior way, how they have chosen their words, the *instinct of imitation* will come into play and some attempt at imitation of the model will be noticeable. This is, of course, possible only in the higher standards, mostly the VI and the VII. Thirdly, there is the *instinct of self-display*. Given proper incentives, this instinct acts as a powerful stimulus to self-expression. Children like to show themselves off. They like to put forth their best, with zest, when there is some incentive, some hearty applause, some timely commendation. Further, there is the added stimulus of healthy rivalry between boy and boy or group and group. Periodical competitions, setting of prize essays, the award of marks, are all calculated to promote a sense of rivalry. Lastly, the topic for composition should be such as the child will be interested in. It should be such that he knows something about it. It should lie within the ken of his experience—and this is by no means so large and varied as many teachers suppose it to be. It should touch the personality of the child. It is no use asking a child living in a remote, upcountry town and who has never seen such a thing as sea in all his life, to write an essay on ‘A walk on seashore’. It is for this very reason that the Fourth Act of *Shakuntala*, though acclaimed the best, fails to attract the juvenile readers. The pangs of separation which the sage feels when his adopted daughter leaves for her husband’s home, are obviously beyond the experience of children and hence leave them cold. The elders on the other hand, especially those whose experiences lie within the same orbit as those of the sage, are gripped by the pathos of the situation. Good composition must grow out of one’s personal experi-

ence. We write most powerfully when we feel most deeply. We write most convincingly only when we are sincere, and sincerity in its broadest sense is the ultimate test in literary art. The teaching of composition is a failure not infrequently because we demand from our pupils the impossible. We ask them to write on matters which do not even interest them. We ask them to write on topics of which they have no personal experience, no real knowledge of their own. Children will not and cannot write good composition unless they have something to say. They have little to say unless they are interested. If we want them to feel interested and be sincere in what they write we must ask them to write upon matters which lie well within the range of their little experience.

To summarize, we may say that the instincts of gregariousness, self-display, imitation, rivalry or competition help to create a real urge to self-expression, if properly appealed to. The problem for the composition teacher resolves into — (1) rousing these instincts (2) presenting topics that appeal to the interest and personality of the child, and which lie within the orbit of his experience (3) Presenting a suitable situation and a proper audience. (For example, if you want a boy to write a description of Bombay, suggest to him that his friend from Nagpore would very much like to have such a description from him, in fact he has asked for it, and would he oblige him? We will find that the boy, when put on his mettle in this way, would turn out a far more sincere and realistic piece of writing than would probably have been the case, for he has now secured an audience and feels that as the letter is for his friend there is some point in writing it.)

The Aim of Composition

The aim that should animate all composition work has already been stated. It is to make an active use of the

language that is being learnt. Mere understanding the language is not enough. It is only if it is used constantly and in a variety of situations that it can be mastered. We introduce and go on introducing certain words, usages and sentence forms. If properly introduced, these are well understood in their contexts and the learners even demonstrate at the time their ability to use them in another context. But if the matter is left there, it is almost certain that they will be forgotten in near future when they might appear to the pupils as perfect stranger. To prevent such a catastrophe it is of the utmost importance that they should be used over and over again in varying contexts. Composition does this. The pupils have to make use of these words or usages in answering questions, giving out summaries, writing dialogues and in a host of other ways which shall presently be noted. Like a coin the word or the idiom must be kept in constant circulation or else there is a real danger of its lapsing into oblivion and of having to relearn it all over again. To a certain extent, composition does the same work as the Rapid Reader. But the similarity lies only as far as the passive aspect of language-learning is concerned. In a Rapid Reader the pupils come across their old friends, greet them with a smile of recognition and pass on. In composition, they have to use them actively in their own contexts. This fundamental aim of composition should never be lost sight of. It is only if it is constantly kept in view that the composition work will be on planned, systematic lines, with definite results to be achieved and definite aims to be fulfilled. Or else it cannot but be haphazard, wasteful and unproductive of any benefits to the pupils.

This active use of the language will also enable us to realize the two other aims of teaching English, viz, (1) ability to speak English, and, (2) the ability to write in good modern English on any single topic. The Indian pupil

strangers and occasionally official. It will also include skill in presenting his thoughts on a given subject in a clear, well-arranged manner. Now this orderly presentation of thought material has to be acquired with assiduous practice and is not inborn. A 'free' composition is only an euphemistic expression to denote what is at bottom a wooly, disjointed, disintegrated scribbling. That is no essay. The English teacher is not very much concerned with developing new thought in his pupils. But he should create in his pupils the habit of writing in a lucid style. The value of planning and replanning till a final draft is evolved should be impressed upon their minds. It is the purpose of the written exercises to create these attitudes in the pupils and foster them. "The written exercises are directed towards what experience suggests is, to some extent, teachable. What in the art of writing is teachable is not the quality of the writer's ideas but the method of presenting those ideas to the reader. It means such a manner of dividing and arranging a subject, of selecting words, as will convey the meaning of the writer to the reader with the least possible difference between the effect produced and that intended, and also with the least possible wear and tear of the reader's capacity and good will."

The importance of clear-cut presentation is recognized at all hand. Sir Philip Hartog writes in his 'Teaching of English in England', — "It is a mistaken notion to think that English need not be taught scientifically to English boys since it is their mother tongue. But in France this false notion is not prevalent and definite attempts are made to cultivate the art of writing among the boys. There the educational ideals were influenced by Greek and Roman writings. Their writers were mostly lawyers and, therefore, masters of rhetoric. Aristotle stresses the following threefold aspects of good

writing—(1) Invention (arguments or thoughts based on observation, experience or pure imagination), (2) Disposition (arrangement), and (3) Diction (clothing the thoughts in proper words). The French kept these ideals in view. We keep in view only the third aspect whereas the French make the study of logic compulsory for all. The French boy trains himself to write logically. He is asked to question himself at every stage while he writes his composition. The Socratic method enables him to know why he is introducing a detail at a particular point, why he must reject a particular aspect, why he must choose a particular word or expression. I would recommend these three aims of written composition—(1) to enable boys to record their own observations, (2) to stimulate the boys to explore and elaborate their own thoughts and to develop their own powers of thinking, and (3) to enable the boys to convey to other people the result of their thinking as clearly and completely as possible."

To summarise, the aims of teaching composition should be—(1) to provide an active use of the language that is being learnt, and without it mastery over it cannot be achieved, (2) to help the formation of speech-habits so that the pupils come to think in English and speak it automatically without constant reference to the rules of grammar and meaning of words. This aim is achieved by the intense speech practice which oral composition affords, (3) to enable the pupils to express in writing their thoughts and experiences and wishes as lucidly as possible.

The Ways of Approach :

The five recognized ways of approach to composition are—(1) the way of grammar, (2) the way of composition, (3) the way of literature, (4) the way of free composition, and (5) the 'put the topic in the centre' way of approach. Let us examine each—

(1) *The way of grammar*—In the past and perhaps even now composition for a majority of teachers means grammar and grammar means composition. The children are taught the rules of grammar. They are then asked to construct grammatically correct sentences. And lo, here is composition! But this is no composition. It is only sentence-making as there is no expression of thought, no expression of that inner urge to say something. Composition, as we have seen, is the expression of some thoughts through the medium of a language. The grammar way of approach with its insistence on grammatically correct sentences neglected the thought aspect altogether. It exhibited a supreme unconcern towards the other, and far more important, elements of composition,—the connectedness, the style, the way of expression, the sequence and the organization of thought. Such 'compositions' could not but be lifeless. They stand self-condemned.

(2) *The way of composition*—In this method importance is laid on the thought aspect. As clear thinking and logical businesslike arrangement of thoughts are considered essential, the advocates of this method concentrated on the thorough planning of a composition before it was undertaken. They discuss the topic thoroughly in the class, thrash it out, plan and replan it, and when all the 'points' are neatly arranged and the class is in possession of the model skeleton of the composition, they ask the pupils to write down the exercise. But this method, though very efficient, is open to one serious criticism. We reduce the class to the same, dull, uniform standard. The pupils faithfully follow the plan of the teacher. Everything has been thought out for them by the teacher, down to the last detail. This sort of a thing is fatal to sincerity. The products of the pupils do not bear the impress of their individuality. This system kills all spontaneity or originality. It is like a sausage machine.

which at the turn of the handle rolls out perfectly uniform sausages, of the same weight and shape, the one quite indistinguishable from the other. The system is a sound one in as much as it emphasizes thought and its arrangement but it goes too far in this direction. We should rather devise some means to make the pupils think for themselves. Expression will then come of itself. A preliminary discussion, probing the subject, will certainly be found helpful. But it should not be overdone. It should merely be exploratory in nature, suggesting new or novel angles. We must leave room for individuality in thinking and expression.

(3) *The use of literature (models)* This method of course is possible only in the classes that are fairly advanced. Model essays or extracts from the writings of acknowledged masters of the craft are presented, and the pupils are asked to study them,—how these great writers have arranged their thoughts, the beauty of style and the felicity of diction, the gripping beginning and the wrapping end,—and to play the ‘sedulous ape’. But commendable as the system is, there are serious difficulties to be met with. For one thing there are not enough of such models—and on subjects we want—which are found suitable for our young scholars. Secondly, it is not always that we are rewarded with a model on the subject under discussion. It is sometimes the subject of the models that does not suit us, and sometimes it is our subject that does not have a suitable model. Moreover, even if a satisfactory model is found it can only be of a limited use to us. These writers had a different audience in view when they wrote, they had at their command a vaster range of vocabulary than the one possessed by the pupils and they drew upon an experience fuller, richer and wider than that of the pupils. The experience of children is not always reflected in such models. These, then, however excellent, are not much useful if unconnected with the expe-

nence of the children. Besides, there is a real danger that in asking pupils to imitate the great writers we may be compelling the weaker of them to do what they cannot and thus unwittingly producing a sort of inferiority complex in them. All this does not mean that good models have no use in a class-room. It is rather that the models should come only at the end, only when the pupils have written their compositions. The pupils may then be asked to compare their own efforts with the models, how differently the great writer has said the same thing and how in so very charming a way. It is only when the pupils realize the difference between their own effort and that of the master that the model can be said to have produced any desirable effect, otherwise it will remain merely a display of unattainable excellence. 'The model passage should not be presented to the child until he has made his own attempt to do what has been successfully accomplished by others and has thus realised his own limitations and deficiencies. Otherwise the result will be the slavish and inadequate imitation of what in virtue of its excellence is beyond his powers. The use of such models, however, should be very sparing. Only occasionally may a teacher set for composition a subject which has been excellently handled by competent authors and make use of this for purposes of criticism and comparison with the pupils' attempts. The handling of the exercise of this kind is a difficult matter and a severe test of a teacher's skill. Sometimes the teacher's plan miscarries and his formal analysis and disquisition result in hindering rather than helping even a gifted student in catching something of the spirit and of the expression of great prose writers. It all depends upon the personality and skill of the teacher.

(4) *The way of free composition* In this method the pupils select their own topics and write on them in any way they like. They think, collect material and arrange it

without help or hindrance from the teacher. Complete freedom is theirs. Where does the teacher come in this method? His role is limited to merely announcing the topics previously suggested by the pupils, and correcting the compositions. He has had no control over the selection of a topic or the arrangement of the material collected. This method is a reaction against the way of the controlled composition described above (No. 2). Because under the method of controlled composition the teacher selects a topic, discusses it thoroughly, hammers out an outline with the co-operation of the pupils who then follow it rigidly, the advocates of free composition go to the other extreme and would do away with the teacher altogether. They would grant complete freedom to the pupils. The dangers of this method are quite patent. No one denies that the pupils should be interested in the topic they write on in order to give full scope to their 'self-expression', and that in order to secure this they should be presented with topics which lie within the range of their experience. But this thing can be overdone. The words 'interest', 'self-expression', 'freedom' can be a fetish. They do not entirely obviolate the need for guidance, suggestions and help which an experienced and skilful teacher can offer. Indeed, thoughtful observers are already sounding a note of warning against the tendency of leaving everything to the pupils or giving undue importance to the likes and dislikes of the pupils. The Board of Education in its 'Suggestions for the teaching of English' states, "The teacher is justified in encouraging, within such limits as common sense suggests, the manifold forms of composition in which many boys and girls find a pleasurable activity—forms of 'self-expression' in language. In most schools now-a-days they have some place, and in many a valuable one, but except under the guidance of a teacher who is skilful as well as enthusiastic, their use in the classroom

should be rare and occasional. The benefit is greatest when they are not imposed as a part of the school time-table. Speaking generally of the secondary school, debates are much less entertaining and effective inside the time-table, when they are apt to be formal, than in the freer atmosphere of a school debating society, and a class magazine quickly loses its originality if the collaboration is pursued under the master's critical though kindly eye." Used occasionally they are valuable but pursued regularly as part of the school curriculum 'the joy of them may easily be spoilt' "It is just because of the freedom which gives them birth, of the license of expression which offers the boy his chance of talking about things as he views them without even help from his elders that these may have a real value in the development of the boy's ability to write. They may get nearer what is unteachable in composition than the formal school exercises, but they are not a substitute for these exercises." We thus see that the traditional formal exercise,—the selection of a topic, discussion, collecting material, arranging it, developing a plan, etc.—cannot be dispensed with. Within the framework of these requirements the 'skilful and enthusiastic' teacher may tax his resourcefulness to make the exercise as interesting and palatable to his pupils as he can. After all, teaching pupils to write is teaching them to present their thoughts to the reader in a clear, connected way. And this requires considerable practice in arranging and rearranging your material necessitating frequent revisions of the schemes. Free composition is not a synonym for promiscuous composition.

(5) *The 'put the topic in the centre' way of approach*—The modern method, one which has been found very satisfactory, is what has been for want of a better descriptive name called the 'put the topic in the centre' method. After a topic has been selected for discussion in the class it is, so to

speak, placed in the centre and the pupils are encouraged to think round the subject. The 'how', 'when', 'why', 'where', and 'what' are good friends of ours. They are the lovers which enable us prize open the oyster shells of the subject. They are the can-openers with which to open the hermetically sealed tin of the subject. Tackle the subject with the help of these instruments and the subject will gradually unfold itself to you. Ask numerous questions to the subject and note down the answers. The points will come fast and thick. Admit all that any should be forgotten later on. All the pupils should be invited to contribute no matter how different the angle or how apparently irrelevant the point. All should be noted down on the blackboard. A fairly good deal of data will by now have been collected. Then comes the task of selection, condensation, rejection and disposition. Invite the attention of the boys to the fact that all this pile of material yet lacks order, that it gives the appearance of a house wherein all furniture and pictures and the rich appointments have been heaped together, that it lacks order, decorum. We must create order out of the chaos, beauty out of crudity, simplicity out of gross luxury. This will necessitate not only the artistic arrangement of the material at our disposal but also ruthless scrapping of much that is unessential and does not fit in our scheme of decoration. Beauty lies not in the superabundance of material but in choice, proportion and harmony. Schaller has said that an artist may be known rather by what he omits. Pater echoes him when he says, "In literature an artist may best be recognized by his tact of omission. For all art does but consist in the removal of surplage." But there can be many alternative schemes of decoration depending upon individual taste and interpretation of the beautiful. And so it can be with a subject. The same subject can be viewed from different aspects all of which cannot be included in our

science. Just as a room which is overfurnished, perhaps combining in addition various 'period' styles, is a perfect horror, so is an essay which is a perfect jumble of all aspects, without any pretence at classification and selection. Hence it is necessary to decide on what aspect of the subject we are going to write. There must be some guide to help us in the selection of any particular aspect. Such a guide is the range of the pupil's own experience and the particular kind of audience for whom the pupil writes. By way of illustration let us take the topic 'The Village'. It is possible to view the subject from widely divergent angles—(1) the journey to the village and the description of the place, its setting, surrounding country, natural scenery, etc. (2) the historical viewpoint, tracing the history of the village down the centuries, its political connections and upheavals, perhaps it is the seat of an ancient family once powerful but now crumbling, (3) from the sociological and economic point of view, the occupations and the economic condition of the inhabitants, the crops grown and the industries pursued and the average income, the present economic condition contrasted with what obtained a century ago and the reasons for the improvement or deterioration as the case may be, (4) from the angle of the present 'the village uplift' movement, the insanitary conditions, poor health and high death rate, the ignorance and superstitions of the villagers, lack of education, lack of such educative mediums as the newspaper, library, leisurely recreational facilities, etc., (5) from the administrative point of view, the government of the village and how it is linked with the government of the district and the province, the village officials and their functions, a comparative study of the present administrative system and that which existed in former times, (6) an Indian village compared with villages in other parts of the world. We thus see that we are confronted with a

multitude of aspects. But the experience of the pupil and the audience for whom he is going to write (his equals in the class) will narrow down the choice. The third, fourth and the sixth aspects can easily be ruled out as lying outside his range of experience. He is not an investigator in economic or sociological problems, and he has no experience of foreign lands except for what he has gleaned from travel books and illustrated magazines. The second and the fifth aspects are historical and administrative in nature and require previous reading and preparation: that leaves only the first aspect, the descriptive. We must remember that the pupil cannot have a wider audience of learned, well informed men, that he is not writing a learned treatise or tract which is the outcome of profound reading and prolonged investigations, his very limited experience and as yet very imperfect knowledge preclude such a possibility. The audience which he has in view cannot possibly be any other than his own class-mates whose own attainments are more or less not far with his and that it is their appreciation or otherwise that will most weigh with him. Hence a wise teacher will not rest upon his pupils an aspect which is beyond their experience and comprehension. If he does so will be rewarded with compositions which are indifferent and insincere.

Thus thinking round the subject also prevents digression. The trouble of much of the irrelevant matter creeping in is thus nipped in the bud. Put in a nutshell the method resolves into this—(1) Put the subject at the centre and encourage pupils to think around it. (2) Pupils learn how to think and collect material. This is noted down. (3) Pupils choose the aspect from which to view the subject and reject material that is not in sympathy with it. (4) Arranging the material and preparing the plan. (5) Writing down the essay from the plan. This method is eclectic in that it

combines the good points of both, the method of 'controlled' composition and the method of 'free' composition.

'Thought' and 'Style' in the essay

Punlits will, however, argue, "But what has been discussed concerns the 'science of composition'—this arranging the thoughts, preparing a plan and all that. You will at best be teaching the pupil the technique of writing an essay, merely arranging the thoughts. But what about the thoughts themselves? But what about the 'art of composition'? The thoughts which they arrange so as to prepare a plan are only their thoughts which cannot be very mature. They are bound to be very commonplace. So the final essay though logically presented will yet be very poor from the thought point of view. What are you going to do about this poverty of thought? Are you not going to do something about embellishing the essay with nobler, maturer thoughts? And what about the style? A good essay is something more than mere methodical presentation. It is great thoughts presented methodically and logically in apt and beautiful words. You must also do something to cultivate in your pupils a beautiful style."

These arguments though compelling are easily answered. Our aim in teaching English to our pupils, to whom it is a foreign language,—is to enable them to speak accurately and easily the ordinary language of daily conversation, simple, natural, live English, and to enable them to write down in the language they have learnt to speak their own experiences and thoughts. We are teaching them to express themselves in the new language, it is not our aim to make use of this new language to develop fresh thought. We want them to express the thoughts which come spontaneously to them, we do not want to stimulate new thoughts, certainly not through the medium of a new language. The task of expressing his thoughts through the new medium is difficult

enough for the pupils; we should not make it more difficult by imposing upon him thoughts which are not his and for the expression of which he is not adequately provided by way of suitable linguistic equipment. In composition it is not so much the matter as the manner and the language that should claim our attention. Written composition should be in a way complementary to oral composition. In writing a pupil is going to use the same language, the same vocabulary that he uses in speaking. Within the scope of this vocabulary a written exercise tends to confirm in the pupil's mind the general and particular language lessons taught to him and the speech habits. The written exercise thus serves to provide additional practice in the use of the new language, thus strengthening in the pupil's mind the linguistic associations with their interrelations and arrangement, with a consequent gain in effective expression. Mr. Thompson says, "Avoid pupils to write on abstract subjects or topics which demand a new vocabulary. No special effort should be made to teach a special vocabulary necessary to express thoughts which are in reality the teacher's. A written exercise is one of the means of practising the working vocabulary already acquired, not of acquiring a fresh vocabulary. The use of language for developing fresh thought is the business of the teacher of the vernacular, not of the teacher of English. It is after all a privilege and luxury of the mother-tongue. To exercise the pupil in thinking out fresh matter, or, which is much the same thing, in trying to understand different ideas, is to divert his energies from practice in language to exercises in thought. It is a cardinal principle—a principle of economy—in teaching a modern foreign language for daily use to avoid adding difficulty of matter to difficulty of language. To do so is to divert time and effort we can ill spare from our practice in language. It is to impose two difficulties at the same time. The first duty of the foreign language teacher, as Kirkman reminds

us, is to teach the foreign language." Ryburn also says, "The ability to gather new ideas and a taste for reading so as to gather them should be developed in the vernacular in which the boy has at his command a vastly superior array of words and word-combinations."

The moral is:—Do not ask pupils to write about subjects of which they have little knowledge, and in which, therefore, they have little interest. Make no effort to force your thoughts on them or to develop new thoughts in them through the medium of English, or you will merely be calling upon them 'to make bricks without clay.' The problem for the pupil should be not 'What am I going to say?' but 'How am I going to say it?' So much about the thought part.

Secondly about the style. "What are you going to do about cultivating a style in your pupils' writings?", we are asked. We are told that the beauty of the language, the garment in which thought is clothed, is as important as the thoughts or their arrangement. The style, i. e. the language which will best give expression to the matter, must be carefully chosen. It is style that distinguishes the good from the bad or mediocre. Most people can gather material and arrange it in some way, but not many can express it really well. Are we not going to teach our pupils to express themselves really well, we are asked.

Let us consider what style is and how it is acquired before we pronounce upon the feasibility or otherwise of teaching pupils to acquire it. "Le style, C'est l'homme"—style is the man—says Buffon the great French naturalist. What he means is that the manner in which an author clothes his thoughts in language is the expression of, or reflection of, the author's cast of mind—his natural mode of expressing his thoughts. It reveals something of the personality of the writer. For this reason, style is an intangible thing and somewhat difficult to define, though most of

us know what it means. Put shortly, it is the certain characteristics or peculiarities in the manner in which he habitually clothes his thought. Every great writer has characteristics which mark him off from his fellows. Now these characteristics may be good or bad, they are his own. It is *his* style. Often the word 'style' is interpreted to mean 'elegance' only. This is an imperfect definition. Mere elegance is valueless without correctness and clearness of expression. It is no use to lay beautiful colours on a design or picture that is incorrectly or carelessly drawn. A good style, as an old writer once said, is probably a combination of all three—correctness, clearness and elegance.

In considering the style of an author an analysis should be made based upon examples of his graces, his peculiarities, and his faults. The following points will serve to guide us in discovering these and identifying them as such (1) The nature of his sentences—whether long, rolling and involved, or short and incisive, rapping home the idea expressed, whether of medium length, smoothly flowing and polished. (2) The language—whether superornate, rhetorical and full of high-sounding words, elaborately polished almost to the point of being offensive, or whether simple, direct, using language of every-day speech. whether the writer is direct or fond of circumlocution, whether his epithets are few or too many, striking or commonplace, apt or used in striving after effect. figures of speech—too few or too many, (3) Whether the style is appropriate to the subject matter—does it express the mood of the writer? Is it passionate or coldly logical? Does it convey sincerity or artificiality? (4) Does the writer reveal his personality?—How does he appeal to you—to your reason or emotions or imagination? What manner of man is he?

The list is not exhaustive but nevertheless succeeds in laying bare the problem of style in all its bewildering com-

plexity. The acquisition of these or any one of these characteristics does not appear, on the face of it, an easy task. Yet how have the writers acquired these? By constant reading, by the study of good models, by constant meditation on the meanings of words, by patient practice. Robert Louis Stevenson tells us that his mind was forever fitting what he saw with appropriate words—that he lived with words. Thorndike says that the appreciation of literature requires knowledge of the meaning of words. Tomkinson says that in the appreciation of literature 'it is the force and beauty of words to which attention should be primarily directed'. For this reason Ruskin also urges the closest possible study of a writer's words, not, of course, as an end in itself but as a means to an end. Stevenson, again, tells us that whenever he was attracted by the beauty or the force of a passage to read, he immediately set himself to imitate it "I was unsuccessful, and I knew it, and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful, but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the coordination of parts." It is this practice, prolonged, arduous practice that is required to cultivate or 'build up' a style. Stevenson could do it because he was Stevenson and our boys are not Stevensons, and even he had to write and rewrite. Our boys do not get enough opportunities for practice in writing. Their reading of literature is negligible. How can we expect them to cultivate, within so short a period and with so restricted a scope for reading and writing, a style which took eminent writers like Stevenson years to develop? Our pupil is aptly described by an eminent professor thus, "a fragment of a pupil learning a fragment of a language in a fragment of time"

We must, therefore, give up any attempt at exercising our pupils in the acquisition of a style. We must be satisfied if they succeed in expressing themselves correctly in

the commonplace English which they have learnt to fear' The 'Suggestions for the Teaching of English' also depreciates any conscious effort on the part of the teacher at building up a style in his pupils—"Nothing so far has been said explicitly about style, because as a rule the less said about it in the class-room the better. The best training is to be found in the reading and rereading of the English classics. It is true that at a relatively late stage in his school course a pupil may learn much under the guidance of a skilful teacher from illustrations of characteristic methods of structure, rhythm and balance in prose writing, but discussions by the teacher on style, with illustrative examples, frequently defeat themselves, because they invite premature judgment by the pupil on relative merits of writers whose art he cannot as yet understand. The nearer he gets to the author's meaning, by studying his language and by learning passages from his writings, the more he feels the relation of the language to the thought and the harmony between the two. This is a slow process which cannot be forced. To quote two great authorities: 'The judgment of literature is the final after-growth of much endeavour' The critical sense is not inculcated in an hour, he who has not cultivated it by a long scientific and intellectual discipline will always find adverse judgments to oppose to the more delicate intuitions. Meanwhile, the young writer must be content if by rewriting, preferably after an interval, his first draft of a composition he can satisfy his master's judgment'

The moral that emerges from this discussion is that the cultivating of a style is a long process and that the 'reading and re-reading of the English classics' is the only high road to it. The approach to literature should be, to start with, through the mastery of the commonplace English, because unless the pupil appreciates the commonplace English first he is not likely to appreciate literary English after-

words "to aim at literature is to miss the way to language to aim at language is to pave the way to literature" Our aim, therefore, should be to familiarize the pupil with the commonplace English and not to introduce him prematurely to literary English

Distribution of composition over the school course oral and written composition the curriculum

The aim of teaching English is fourfold, — (1) to understand English, (2) to speak what is understood, (3) to read what is spoken, and (4) to write what is understood, spoken and read. Let the child hear English spoken by the teacher and let him go on learning so that he comes to understand what the speaker means to say. Then he will try to speak what he understands in similar situations. Recognition in print of the spoken word or sentence then follows and he begins to read what he has come to understand and speak. Lastly comes writing when he tries to write what he has come to understand, speak and read. Of the four aims outlined above the ability to speak English and the ability to write English are the two with which composition is concerned, though it must be understood that all the four are interdependent and cannot be pursued in isolation, each contributing to the realization of the others. Ability to speak will be generated if the pupil is given constant opportunities of learning English spoken and speaking it himself. This is where the teacher comes in. He has to provide these opportunities by initiating talk and conversation on various topics and situations which he has carefully selected, their immediate ability to the pupil and their relation to his everyday experience guiding him in his selection. The more such opportunities of talk and conversation, the better for the fixation of speech habits. It is learning to speak a language by speaking it, and here as elsewhere, the more the practice

the better are the results. In other words, we should have plenty of oral composition.

But at the same time we cannot neglect the other aim, the ability to write. We want to enable the pupil to write what he can speak and read. We must have written composition too. What proportion should oral composition bear to written composition? How and in what measure should oral and written composition be spread over the school course?

Oral and written composition

The Junior stage more of oral and less of written composition

Since in the junior stage, i. e. from standard I to IV, pupils are mostly occupied with acquiring the rudiments of the new language and a working vocabulary, and since they do so by hearing and speaking, oral composition will play a large part in the language learning process. Thus learning to speak the language by speaking it requires a good deal of intensive practice and consequently will claim a lion's share of the available time for oral work. Written composition in the junior stage therefore cannot be much and whatever there will be will be confined to the linguistic material which the pupils have acquired. This cannot be much. Besides, written composition should come only after the pupils have acquired a reasonable facility, through constant practice, in the use of words-combinations and sentence-forms. Written composition must await the acquisition of this facility which in its turns depends upon intensive practice. Very limited time therefore, can be devoted to written composition in the lower standards.

Another reason why we cannot have much of written composition in the standards is that the pupils could not have acquired much of the language material and even this would be very simple in its nature. Written compositions in

such circumstances cannot be ambitious and resolve into the simplest descriptions of animals and objects.

The Senior stage —More of written work and less of oral composition

By the time the pupil enters the senior stage he will have acquired a sufficient working vocabulary which he would find adequate to express his everyday thoughts and needs and wishes. His speaking and reading vocabulary would be fairly extensive and his writing vocabulary, though proportionately less so, will nevertheless be enough for his purpose. "At the early stages there is only the speaking vocabulary, gradually the reading vocabulary is developed, and finally the pupil attains a writing vocabulary." In the junior stage the writing vocabulary is severely limited, but as the pupil progresses this gradually grows though the largest gain is to be found in the reading vocabulary. We can, therefore, encourage pupils at this stage to express themselves in writing. Written effort increases with a corresponding diminution in oral work. This does not mean that oral work has no place in the senior stage. Telling a story, narrating an incident, giving the substance of a poem or a prose extract taking part in a debate, etc. are some of the valuable channels through which oral practice in speaking the new language can be secured. It is only that less stress is laid on and less time devoted to oral work in this stage than in the junior one.

It is now time we turn to a detailed consideration of the two aspects of composition, oral and written, the aims and value of each, and the various forms each takes.

Oral Composition

(A) *Aims of oral composition* (1) The best way to learn a language is by speaking it. The first aim of oral composition is, therefore, the acquisition of a serviceable speaking vocabulary. This will naturally contain the most essential

words and parts of speech which will equip the pupil to carry on the simplest of conversations. This is the most important of the functions of oral composition in the junior stage. (ii) The second aim is to provide practice in the use of the vocabulary acquired. In the absence of such practice many of the words, no matter how successfully introduced, will lapse into oblivion. They must be constantly revised. "Revise while you still remember, not because you have forgotten," is an important maxim. Once forgotten the words will have to be relearned. (iii) The third aim is to enable the pupil, by means of constant speech practice, to converse in simple, colloquial English and to fit him later on for continuous speech. This is one of the fourfold aims of teaching English. Our pupils though able to understand spoken and written English are often very poor 'talkers'. Any occasion demanding only a little in the way of continuous speech finds them cold and the most ambitious attempt at conversation does not go beyond answering the teacher's questions. This nervousness which bespeaks lack of confidence is understandable. They never have had any practice in speaking. As long as schools exist where the English lesson is conducted in the vernacular, and as long as Heads of schools are found to tolerate this practice there is little hope of improvement. Intensive oral work suggests itself as the only remedy. (iv) The fourth aim is the acquisition of correct pronunciation. It is possible to understand written language without being able to pronounce the words or sentences. Dr. West keeps this reading aim in the forefront in teaching English to Indians. But though reading (silently) ability will have been acquired speech will have been neglected. This restricted aim cannot satisfy us. We want our pupils to speak English and speak it in the way it should be spoken. We want them to acquire the right pronunciation. Right pronunciation includes not merely the

utterance of isolated sounds or words but the articulation of sounds and words in combination, and a correct English intonation. Plenty of oral composition will secure this aim. Needless to say, the teacher's own pronunciation must be faultless. (v) Fifthly, *oral work paves the way to written work*. There is much to gain if the topics for written composition are dealt with thoroughly in oral composition. Though we cannot go so far as to say that 'every oral lesson is a written exercise minus the mechanics of writing,' because speech vocabulary and writing vocabulary must always remain separate in spite of some inevitable overlapping, we cannot doubt the great help which oral work can render to written work. When pupils begin to write they tend to use stilted language, in speaking they are more natural. One of the advantages of oral work is the help it gives to writing plain English with naturalness and native purity of idiom. "The orderly conversation in the classroom is a necessary counterpart of the pupil's set written exercises in composition." (vi) Lastly, we must consider here another aim which is sometimes advocated. It is said that we must *produce eloquent speakers of English*. Considering the linguistic barriers which isolate one Indian province from another, English, it is argued, is the only language that overcomes these barriers and enables a person to be understood from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Calcutta to Karachi. Besides, we want good orators in English who could represent the case of India in England or other English speaking countries. To produce such eloquent speakers the foundations must be laid in the school. Pupils must be habituated to express themselves in English so thoroughly that they come to regard it as their second mother tongue. This view leaves room for controversy. The claim of English to be the *lingua franca* of India has not gone unchallenged and we find ourselves on ground that is very much debatable.

Besides, the nursing of eloquence can hardly be left to a foreign language. The natural medium to cultivate it is the mother-tongue. It can even be argued that eloquence is hardly a commodity that can be made to order. We cannot allow ourselves to enter into the controversy, and in the meanwhile must content ourselves with the modest aim of enabling our pupils to talk in plain English with reasonable facility and fluency. One high authority states that our aim in teaching English to our pupils should be nothing more ambitious than "making it possible for them to understand spoken English and converse in English by the time they leave the high school."

The Importance of Oral Composition advantages

(1) *It secures the interest of the pupil.* Speech is the main thing in learning a foreign language. The best way of learning it is by speaking it. This speaking of it makes the pupil feel that it is "real and vital and useful and therefore interesting." He learns to use it in speaking and in doing so he uses it to express what he feels. Thus he comes to realize the utility of the language, feels that it is not merely a toy but a living thing through which he can express what he feels and wants to say. This creates interest which is so often lacking when a language is learnt by rules of grammar alone and consequently is never utilized by the learner to express his thoughts. (ii) *Visible audience and hence greater interest*—When the audience for whom the pupil is speaking is visible, he will be able to express himself better than when he is doing it for an unknown and uncertain audience. He will not be feeling the urge to communicate his thoughts. Audience is better emphasized in oral composition. Besides, the gregarious instinct is also aroused when the pupil feels himself taking part in conversation along with others. This is an added stimulus to the pupil to put forth his best with all sincerity.

(iii) *Habit of clear, distinct speech formel*—The pupil comes to speak clearly and distinctly because he realizes that if he does not do so he will not be listened to and this is a stab to his self esteem and personal pride. When a pupil knows that he is speaking so that others must understand him, he is careful of how he speaks. If he speaks indistinctly or with any trace of ambiguity he knows full well that he would be interrupted by his audience. (iv) *Lead to good writing* As an aid to good writing the value of oral composition has already been noted above (see No. (v)—Aims of oral composition). (v) *Readywittedness* A man who speaks well often becomes readywitted. Practice in speaking develops a readiness to express oneself. (vi) *Gain in clear thinking* A man who speaks clearly also thinks clearly. This may appear like putting the cart before the horse, for it should be the clear thinking that should promote clear speech. But psychology tells us that clear speech and clear thinking go hand in hand. The speaker knows that unless he presents his thoughts in an orderly, well-arranged manner he has no chance of securing a hearing. Hence he arranges his thoughts logically and presents them clearly. Oral composition promotes clear speech and through it clear thinking. (vii) *Alertness* A good speaker is usually a good hearer. He must be alert in hearing what others are saying lest he should miss some of it. Training in good speaking is thus also a training in good learning. (viii) *More practice speaking secures more practice in the use of language than does written composition* We can accomplish almost four times the work than is possible in writing. (ix) *Affects written composition favourably* We want our pupils to write in a natural, live English and not in a stilted, artificial, ornate way. The modern English style is assuming the smoothness of a table top. The old style, associated with the names of Johnson or Macaulay are not appreciated today. When

pupils appreciate the fact that there is not much difference between what they speak and what they write they will get into the habit of writing in smooth, commonplace English and be natural in their expression. As a boy speaks so will he write. The contribution of oral composition in this direction is considerable. (x) In oral composition *mistakes can be corrected immediately*, thus preventing wrong associations from being formed. In written work there is a danger of wrong association being formed and taking root.

It will thus be realized how important a place oral composition occupies in learning or teaching a language. "Oral lessons have a high value. Practice alone gives clear-headedness when making even simple sentences while standing on one's feet; some boys excel in speech who at first are backward in writing; the art of rational conversation needs to be cultivated for its own sake and as leading to orderly discourse." But how few of the teachers recognize the supreme importance of oral composition! Throughout the school course the greatest emphasis should be laid on oral composition.

Having discussed the aims and importance of oral composition we may now turn to the syllabus, the various forms it can take, and the various devices that are adopted.

Syllabus in oral composition -

This must necessarily differ according to the stage of the pupil's proficiency or attainment. Roughly speaking, there are three stages of oral composition—(1) The very earliest stage where the pupil is just hearing English spoken and trying to imitate it in his speech. The pupil's speech is here confined to the direct reproduction of what the teacher utters or the words of the text or to answers to questions such that the question forms themselves can be turned into answers with very slight modification. (2) The second stage is reached when the pupil has advanced a little further in his language learning. At this stage the oral composition is of the nature

of *mimic reproduction* which may consist of modelling sentences on those heard but with variations,—telling stories not necessarily in the same words and order as those of the text, etc. (iii) The third stage is of what is called *free reproduction*. The pupil is no longer pinned down to the teacher's words or the text. He breaks away from these and speaks independently. He will have by now mastered sufficient vocabulary to be able to do so.

Below is suggested a form-wise distribution of oral work.—

Standard First Understanding what the teacher says and reproducing his utterances. This is more or less of an echo type of work. The teacher asks questions of the simple type,—‘What is this?’, ‘How many books have you?’, ‘Where do you live?’, ‘When do you come to school?’, ‘Why do you go to the playground?’, ‘What is this made of?’, ‘What colour is the black-board?’, ‘How does the lemon taste?’, etc.—and the pupils answer these. It will be seen that the answers can be framed by only slightly modifying the question itself. Secondly, when the Reader is taken up there is conversation based on the text. The text contains all the answers. Sometimes a picture may form the basis of conversation. Pupils describe the objects in the picture and answer the teacher's questions,—‘What is the boy in the picture doing?’, ‘Who is standing near him?’, ‘What has he got in his hand?’. Hardly, they describe simple objects such as ‘a cow’, ‘a dog’, ‘a cat’, ‘my school’, the description never extending beyond four or five sentences. It is essential that the teacher, especially in the junior stage, should constantly be devising measures whereby to revise the vocabulary he has been steadily introducing. An ambitious and skilful teacher will also succeed in eliciting from some of the boys the very simplest of stories which he has told with the help of picture. The story must be very simple,

abound in repetitions, and need no new vocabulary. It may be retold by the pupils in parts.

Standard Second Same as for Standard First but with modifications. Practice in the changing of tenses, singular into plural and vice versa, adding epithets may be given. Some of the stories in the reader may be reproduced by the pupils. An added interest will be created if these are told as any particular character in the story would tell it. Some may even be dramatized in the class. Picture composition also comes in and makes the exercise in speaking interesting.

Standard Third The same scheme as above continued. In addition to telling stories, fuller description of objects or incidents may be attempted e.g. 'a farm', 'my garden', 'a railway station', 'a cricket match', 'a camel', 'a policeman'. Such descriptions need not be lengthy and may be preceded by free talk on relevant pictures. Independent picture composition. Dramatization of stories from the text. Questions and answers based on the textual matter read.

Standard Fourth —The scheme stated above amplified. The discussion on the reading material. Dramatization may be attempted but will be found to be losing the attraction it held previously. Descriptions of scenes and incidents and processes. Outlines of stories may be given and pupils required to elaborate them. Or only the beginning or the end may be provided leaving the rest to be supplied by the pupils.

Standards Fifth, Sixth and Seventh —This is the senior stage and the pupils will have been sufficiently equipped linguistically to carry on conversation or attempt some sort of continuous speech with reasonable hope of success. Oral revision of portions done assumes greater importance. Let pupils recapitulate briefly the main points of the previous lesson and similarly let them at the end of the lesson take

a rapid review of the main points learnt during the lesson. This work provides an excellent opportunity for good oral work. It is also important because it gives scope for continuous speech. One noticeable difference between the junior and the senior stage is that whereas pupils in the former stage can hardly be expected to speak continuously for any length of time those in the senior stage are in a position to do and must be made to do so. Summaries of chapters and long narrative poems may be demanded. A generalized idea may be presented and illustrations called for, or the process may be reversed. Episodes in a story may be varied and alternative endings or beginnings discussed,—e.g. 'How would you prefer a different ending to the story of Enoch and Arden? Have you any suggestions? How would it affect the structure of the story?' Such an exercise can only be attempted in the Senior Stage. There is also composition by analogy. Certain incidents or experiences are referred to in the text. The pupil is invited to relate his own cognate experience of similar incident or experience. Lastly there are the debates. Their value in generating self-confidence and poise is undoubted. It is a difficult task but under the able guidance of a skilful teacher it need not be beyond the powers of boys and girls of average ability.

Some of the devices for promoting oral composition

Below are suggested some of the interesting ways of securing oral practice. Their use is mostly limited to the Junior stage though at least some of them may be adapted to the requirements of the Senior stage.

(1) Sentence practice on ordinary themes or objects. This practice may be based on a picture. Pupils may be encouraged to ask questions.

(2) Questions and answers are mismatched and pupils are required to utter the correct pairs.

(3) Requiring the pupils to furnish questions the answers

number of questions to the teacher. They may seek any information they like. Sometimes the boys may ask questions to one another. For example, a boy who was unable to witness a cricket match asks another all about it. The second boy tells him what he saw. Or, there may be an imaginary dialogue. The sister or the mother of a boy is supposed to ask him to tell her what happened at the cricket match or the Annual Social or some other event, and the boy proceeds to describe it. The respective parts may actually be played by the pupils in the classroom. The object, of course, is to provide speech practice by one way or another. Conversation thus becomes lively and real.

(12) The game of 'keeping a school' Somebody becomes a teacher and carries on the lesson like the important personage he is. The parts of the superintendent, the clerk, or other teachers may be enacted in the classroom. Children are shrewd observers and nothing escapes their keen observation. The idiosyncracies, mannerisms, manner of talk and walk, all are noted and will be reproduced faithfully on such occasions, providing immense fun and amusement to the spectators. This is a highly entertaining exercise and is suitable even for the senior stage.

(13) Mock trials. The daily newspaper contains reports of cases or trials and some of these will be found suitable to our purpose. The report of a trial is read out to the pupils. The trial is then dramatised, the parts of the judge, the accused, the witnesses, the counsels for the prosecution and the defense being assigned to suitable pupils. Such trials are a very highly entertaining piece of work. Besides providing practice in oral composition they are at the same time instructive and familiarize the pupils with the courtroom procedure. Suitable even for the higher standards.

(14) Dramatization of the dialogue from the text.

(15) Initiative composition. Now dialogues are based

on a known model with perhaps a few changes in the situation and characters of the original but otherwise faithfully following it. These are dramatized

(15) A story dramatized A story either from the text or one told independently by the teacher is adapted to form a little play and is dramatized.

(16) Debates and 'little man's lectures'. There may sometimes be arranged. But they should not be too many and in any case should not exceed more than two in each term. They should not form part of the weekly timetable. Their value is greater if they be outside the school court and are conducted in a free atmosphere than as a routine in the classroom under the eye of the teacher. The subjects for such debates should be easy enough, related to the experience of the pupils and should require no new vocabulary. The subjects for the 'little man's lectures' may be selected from such as these,—'My trip to ', 'The film I liked most', 'What I think of such and such a thing or person', 'How I do a particular thing', 'My favourite hobby', etc. Training in diction is not included in this scheme because it does not fall under oral 'composition'.

(17) Dividing the class into two or more batches and setting them asking questions in and demanding explanations from one another. These may be based on the textual matter or be on any subject of common interest.

(18) Picture composition

(A) Picture composition begins at the very earliest stage and can be continued up to the fourth standard. The best way to introduce a foreign word is by showing the actual object it stands for where this is possible. The second best way, where direct representation is not possible, is that of indirect representation by means of pictures. Much of the vocabulary in the first three standards is taught from pictures. Besides being useful for introducing new words or actions,

to which are provided. Or, the pupils may be encouraged to ask any question they like to the teacher. They should feel that it is not the teacher's exclusive privilege to ask questions and that they too can play at the game.

(1) Setting and constructing puzzles. A puzzle of the following type is given—'I am round. I am big. I am made of leather. I cut it. Everybody kicks me. Who am I?' The boys will readily provide the answer, 'a football'. Sometimes by way of variation a subject may be given and boys asked to construct puzzles upon it and present them to their class-mates for solution. This can be a very interesting exercise. Suitable for the first and second standards.

(5) Descriptions of processes of the 'How do you do it?' type, e.g. 'How do you make tea?', 'How do you fly a kite?', 'How do you mend a puncture in your cycle tube?', 'What tools will you require for doing such and such a thing?', 'How do you send money by a money-order?', 'How do you play a particular game?', 'How do you make a paper box', etc. The boys knew the process and take an interest in describing it. This sort of exercise is suitable to all standards though more details will be expected of pupils in the Senior stage.

(6) The game of 'If I were somebody in particular'. Let pupils describe what they would do if they were somebody in particular, e.g. 'If I were a teacher', 'If I were a king', 'If I were a policeman', 'If I were a merchant', etc. They should be able to project themselves into the personality they wish to be and identify themselves completely with it. Children like to feel themselves important and play the part of another. It is all make-believe for they cannot do so in reality. This game gives vent to their repressed desires. If possible and desired let them actually play the part. Somebody becomes a teacher or a

merchant and other boys who do not use any parts. Business should be conducted as it would be in reality. A very interesting device though its use cannot be extended beyond the fourth standard.

(7) 'The lost property game'. When the physical training class is over, the teacher has already removed some of the things from the boys' jackets and hidden them. Then he asks the boys to describe what they have lost and identify their belongings by describing them accurately and claim them. Suitable up to the fourth standard. Thefts of articles belonging to boys are unfortunately not of infrequent occurrence in our schools and in such cases the victim should be asked to give an accurate description of the missing property and of the circumstances of its loss.

(8) The 'Show me the way to' method. Boys are asked to describe fairly accurately the way they come to school. Satisfactory answers can be expected to such questions as 'How will you go to the market?', 'How will you go to the West End Cinema theatre?', 'Show me the way to Kanade's house'. They should be able to give accurate information about how to proceed to an address to a person who is in need of it.

(9) The 'guessing game'. Begin talking about an object without actually mentioning it, e.g. 'Because of the motor car this thing has lost some of its importance. It is a beautiful thing. It is very useful to us. It was very important in former days' and so on. Of course, the talk is about a horse. Sometimes the process is reversed and boys may be asked to attempt such round about descriptions about certain objects. Useful up to the fourth standard.

(10) The stories based upon pictures. See below, 'Picture Composition'.

(11) 'Free discussion'. We may occasionally have a period for free discussion, the boys may ask any type and

pictures, especially composite pictures representing a scene or an incident or a variety of objects standing in some intelligible relation to one another, provide a very convenient spring board for conversation. The various objects in the pictures are identified, their positions or states in which they are noted, the actions which they are represented as executing are understood, and finally the whole situation which the picture is intended to depict is visualized. This is all done by means of questions and answers. To a teacher pictures represents 'groups of ideas', and he discusses these ideas with the pupils. Every lesson in the text should be prefaced by a picture or pictures representing the main incident or topic in it. Some progressive modern readers exhibit some attempt in this direction, but still we come across very many lessons in which the provision of a suitable picture would have made all the difference between dullness and interest. Not only do they help the pupils in understanding particular words or situations but they also provide the teacher with a starting point for discussion on the lesson.

(B) *Advantages of picture composition* — (1) *Interest*. It is an interesting device for securing practice in speech. Children love pictures, so much so that a particularly interesting picture impels them to enter into spontaneous discussion upon it.

(2) *Vividness*. They make the idea perfectly clear to the pupils where no amount of verbal explanation could have done so. Foreign scenes or objects which are not to be met with in our country are best understood from pictures.

(3) *Utility in portraying words denoting action*. There are certain actions which it is not possible to demonstrate in the classroom e.g. 'cry', 'jump', 'slap', 'climb'.

(4) *Utility in introducing new vocabulary* especially in the lower standards, e.g. words relating to such topics as

the playground, the post office, a street scene, a railway station, a visit to a theatre, etc.

(5) It affords subject matter for a written exercise based upon the discussion

(6) Foreign customs and ways of life can be better illustrated than if merely explained

(C) *Limitations of picture composition* —(1) Pictures cannot be used to express words which are incapable of being represented pictorially, e. g. abstract ideas such as truth, justice, happiness, never, really speaking, etc. A story with plenty of action can be represented by a picture or series of pictures but a topic like 'A dialogue on the relative merits of Indian and foreign games' can not be.

(2) Its use is limited to the lower standards only as pupils in the senior classes feel that they have outgrown this stage which they consider proper 'only for kiddies' They like to 'put on airs'

(3) Though pictures may be used to introduce new vocabulary, a picture composition lesson as such runs only at practice in the vocabulary already acquired. The distinction between the use of a picture to introduce a single word or idea and its use for discussion on the story it represents should be realized. In the former case the picture is set aside after the words are introduced, in the latter, elaborate discussion takes place on the picture and what it represents. For example, take a picture representing a scene at a railway station. The teacher may use the picture to introduce such new words as the platform, the porter, the booking office, etc. But he will not attempt any discussion on the various activities that go on at the place. When the words are already introduced he may take a special picture composition lesson and use the same picture for discussion on such matters as, 'Where will you purchase your tickets?',

'Who gives you the tickets?', 'Do you see this man in the picture? What is he called?', 'What will you say to him?', 'Whom will you show your tickets?', 'What does he do to them?', 'Where do you go then?', 'Who will carry your luggage?', 'Show me all these things in the picture?', etc. The picture composition lesson is primarily intended to provide practice in the use of vocabulary already known. The words which it is considered would be new to the pupils should be previously introduced. If the teacher has to introduce new words during a picture composition lesson, the conversation on the picture will be constantly interrupted.

(D) Topics for picture composition

(i) *Animals* The conversation will embrace such points as the physical peculiarities, habits, native habitat, usefulness to man, food, etc.

(ii) *Scenes or incidents* such as a street scene, a railway station, a class-room, the inside of a house, a river scene, a post office, a cinema theatre, a busy street, a cricket match, a procession, a village scene, a blacksmith's shop, a restaurant, a farmyard scene, a garden, a market, a battle scene or some other historical incident, a harvest scene, etc.

(iii) *Persons*—a postman, a policeman, a school peon, a beggar, a shopkeeper, etc. The points discussed would cover such items as the dress, appearance, activities, usefulness to us, etc.

(iv) *Stories*—The picture may represent the main incident in the story and the beginning and the end may be conjectured from it. The whole story is elicited from the pupils.

(v) *A Story in stages* Instead of one picture there

may be four or five depicting the different stages in the development of the story. Each is presented in turn and thus the whole story is elicited. Sometimes by way of variation only the first and the last are presented and pupils are asked to imagine the intermediate incidents. Sometimes the last is omitted and pupils are asked to supply a logical end. There is room for any number of variations.

The topics suggested above are only representative of their types and others of similar nature will easily suggest themselves to an enthusiastic teacher. As far as possible the topics and the pictures should be related to Indian and not English life. Scenes which are unfamiliar to the Indian pupils should be avoided, at any rate in the beginning. Suitable pictures can be procured from reputable publishers in the educational line. A perusal of catalogues published by these will yield the information sought.

(E) *How to conduct a picture composition lesson.*

(1) Selection of a suitable picture. It should be a large wall picture so that it can be seen clearly by every one in the class. It should contain all the essential things to be discussed but it should not be a mass of details in which case attention can not be focussed on the important things to which it is desired to draw attention. The human figures in the picture should be shown in natural attitudes suggesting life and movement. Mere portraits of persons are not of much value.

(2) The picture is hung on the wall and the attention of the pupils invited to it. Sometimes a teacher prefaces the exhibition of the picture by a preliminary talk on the topic. I think this is quite unnecessary. Let the teacher exhibit the picture and plunge straightway into the discussion unless the picture depicts an historical incident in which case a

reference to history leading up to the incident will have to be made.

(iii) Conversation based on the picture By means of questions and answers the teacher gets his pupils to identify and point out the several objects in the picture. But this is not all. He should proceed to discuss the activity suggested, the motives lying behind it, and imaginary developments. There is indeed a wide scope for discussion which will be conditioned only by the range of the pupils' vocabulary.

(iv) Some of the pupils are asked to piece together the information gathered and present it in a connected narrative which will be in the nature of a summary. It may be attempted in parts.

(v) The important points as they are elicited may be written on the blackboard and the pupils asked to take them down. This is in the nature of a preparation to a written exercise on the topic. This will necessarily divert some of the time for the lesson to writing and the main aim of the lesson—speech practice—will suffer. I should, therefore, suggest that the teacher and the pupils concentrate on speech and leave writing alone. If a written record of the discussion is desired, a separate lesson for the purpose may be taken. It should again be reiterated here that the matter for the composition is not so important as the manner, that our aim is not so much to gather information or new knowledge as to secure practice in speaking and to form correct habits of speech. Such habits are formed only by recurring practice.

In all such 'picture talks' the children should do most of the talking. The teacher should confine himself to the barest minimum as his share in the conversation. Let the children say all they have to say about the picture—and if the picture really interests them they will say a great deal.

When the stream of comments and questions begins to run thinly the teacher puts a clever question or two, drawing children's attention to things they have not noticed in the picture. In this way all that is in the picture itself is made use of in oral composition.

There is another method in which the picture composition lesson is conducted. Instead of one large wall picture there are smaller ones of the picture post-card size. It is argued that instead of all the pupils looking at one large picture it is better for each child to be in possession of one. He is thus very much nearer to it and can study it closely. Sets of such picture post-cards on various topics are now obtainable from educational publishers. These post-cards have on their backs printed questions bearing on the picture. The pupil, when he receives his copy, studies these questions with reference to the picture and gets ready with the answers. The conversation then proceeds normally as in the other method noted above. This is a kind of silent reading of pictures, the printed questions usurping the legitimate function of the teacher to a certain extent. After experimenting with this method I have found that the actual time available for conversation is reduced by as much as 10 to 15 minutes. The mechanism of reading the printed questions and referring to the picture on the back-side absorbs valuable time which should have been devoted to oral work. For the first ten minutes during which this picture-reading is going on there is complete silence and there is not that brisk conversation and animation which should characterise an oral lesson. Still there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this method and it can be interspersed with the 'regular' one which depends upon the large wall picture and the teacher's voice.

Above are outlined some of the ways, including the way of picture composition, by which pupils can be exercised in speech practice. What is wanted is the enthusiastic teacher,

possessed of that attitude of continuously thinking and devising ways and means which will appeal to the pupils, and capable of infecting them with his enthusiasm

Precautions to be observed in connection with oral composition

(1) The main aim of oral composition, viz securing continuous oral practice, should be steadily kept in view

(2) The pupils do most of the talking, the teacher's share being the barest reducible. The speech practice is intended for the pupils and not for the teacher

(3) Oral composition is primarily meant to be a means for intensive practice in the use of vocabulary already acquired and not for introducing a new one. "Continuous speech practice should always be based on what is already familiar or has just been taught"

(4) The topics for discussion should be interesting to the children which means they must relate to the actual experiences of the learners. They must be concrete

(5) It is not so much the matter for conversation as the manner of it that is important. Inaccuracies in the matter may be condoned, but the manner of expression—grammatical accuracy, appropriateness of the word or idiom employed, and correct pronunciation—must be very carefully watched. It is a waste of time to be constantly checking the accuracy of the narrative instead of attending to that of the language. Errors in these must be promptly corrected. Since we are providing practice in speech we must ensure that it is faultless. If prompt measures are not taken to correct faulty speech there is a real danger that the pupil himself and the rest of the class listening to him will not be made aware of the inaccuracy and will adopt it in good faith as accuracy. This is simply putting back

the hands of the clock." The remedy will be worse than the disease.

(6) The teacher should so arrange matters that every individual, so far as class-room conditions permit, secures a 'satisfactory amount' of practice. This is admittedly a difficult task for the teacher especially where classes contain forty boys. Still he should make the best of a bad bargain by dividing his class into two or three groups one of which he engages in conversation while the others are kept occupied with some sort of 'seat work'. By turns each group will get an opportunity for speech practice. More periods for English teaching should be allotted in the timetable if the teacher is to carry out the suggestion.

(7) If the teacher finds that there are certain mistakes which stand out as being frequent in occurrence and common to the class he should select those for special treatment in a lesson taken especially for the purpose. The class can be taught during such a lesson not to repeat a certain grammatical mistake. It will not commit it on the next two or three occasions. The correct form will be remembered for some time. But if we want it to be remembered always so that a habit will have been formed it must be revised at frequent intervals. Comment lessons therefore must be frequent and must treat not only 'fresh' mistakes but also those which have been the subject of previous lessons.

(8) The teacher must be all encouragement to the pupils. Nothing discourages a pupil so much as constant interruptions by the teacher by way of correction. He gives up the task in disgust. Minor errors, therefore, may be slurred over for the time being and 'saved up' for correction after he has finished. Meanwhile the boy goes ahead with his talking. In the case of serious errors it is of course necessary to switch over to some other boy.

(3) The foundations of continuous speech ability and fluency of delivery should be laid in the mother-tongue. If these are 'well and truly' laid there will be no small 'carry over' to the other medium of expression, — the foreign language. Everything possible should be done to make pupils good talkers' in their own language.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

One of the aims of teaching English to our pupils is to enable them to write it, — the others being the understanding, the speaking, and the reading of the language. Written composition is intended to secure this aim.

The Aim of written composition. We must not pitch our standards too high. Our aim in teaching composition is primarily (1) to enable the pupil to write what he understands and speaks (2) to enable him to express in writing what he feels, his wishes and requirements. This will necessitate the acquisition of a writing vocabulary, for writing and speaking vocabularies must to some extent remain distinct. We do not speak exactly in the way we write, nor do we use in writing expressions which are obviously colloquial. We do not use the words 'rapping', 'rattling' in writing and whoever has used 'nevertheless' in ordinary talk! The schoolboy, therefore has to acquire a serviceable writing vocabulary (3) to enable him to be conversant with the ordinary forms of correspondence to friends, relatives, other acquaintances and on special occasions, to business men and officials (4) to enable him to present whatever he wishes to state in a clear, logical manner. The importance of clear-cut, well-ordered presentation of thought is but imperfectly realized and it should be our constant endeavour to train our pupils to be precise and logical in whatever they write. It is not the matter for the presentation but the

Written composition, therefore, must be closely related to the other two activities, speaking and reading. It will be, to a large extent, based upon the speaking and reading material. Since much of this, for the sake of convenience, has some reader as a centre, written exercises must necessarily be restatements of the textual matter in as many variations as possible. Grammar teaching, again, cannot be isolated from the other aspects of language-learning and will be closely correlated to oral and written composition. Finally, there will be some independent or 'free' composition such as the writing of stories, descriptions, essays, a paraphrase, a precis, etc.

The scope of written composition can now be defined. It will include—

(i) Writing arising out of the text. The stories from the text written from different angles, answers to questions on the textual matter, summaries of character or poems from the text, etc.

(ii) Writing arising out of grammar teaching. Various exercises suggest themselves, e.g. simple sentence construction, transformation of sentences, synthesis of sentences, changing the Direct form of narration into the Indirect and vice versa, use of appropriate parts of speech, etc.

(iii) Writing arising out of attempts at independent composition unconnected, at any rate superficially, with either textual or grammar study. This will include—descriptions of objects, animals, scenes, incidents, processes, writing of stories, dialogue writing, letter writing, precis writing, paraphrasing, translation exercises, paragraph-writing or essay writing.

(iv) Such mechanical, corrective exercises as transcription and dictation. Some will contend that only what is independent or 'free' composition can legitimately be termed 'composition' and that all that arises out of textual or grammar teaching is really in the nature of practice writing.

connected with the text and grammar and ought not on that account to be included under composition. This is no doubt true, but English, it should be remembered, is a foreign language to our pupils and every opportunity of writing English, no matter in what connection, must be seized upon and made to serve our purpose—to enable the pupils to write correct English. Besides, as we have seen, the different branches of teaching, though treated separately for the sake of exposition, do not in practice remain separate but are interminably mixed up from the very beginning. Hence we are compelled to take a broader view and regard all writing as part of written composition.

How to organize written composition over the school course.

The following principles will guide us in organizing written composition. These are—

- (1) *Gradation.* This will be from two points of view—
 - (a) gradation from the point of view of the pupil's capacity.
 - (b) gradation from the point of view of subject-matter.
- (2) *The Concentric plan.* Almost all the different forms of composition are introduced from the beginning and are practised throughout the school course. Thus, simple descriptions, letter-writing, story-writing are introduced from the first standard and are continued throughout. The treatment of these topics will of course differ as the pupils progress from the lower to the higher standards. In the Periodic plan certain forms of composition are reserved for particular standards only, e.g. stories in standards I to IV, descriptions in standard V, letters, paraphrasing and essays in standard VI, and all the forms in standard VII. This plan

divides composition into arbitrary compartments and robs it of much of the interest it should hold for the pupils. We must, therefore, acquaint them with all the forms though their treatment in each standard will be determined by the stage of development reached by the pupils.

- (3) *Controlled composition before free composition* : In the Junior stage the pupils have to struggle to master the preliminaries of writing—the mechanics of writing, the use of the sentence, the arrangement of their thoughts, etc. Hence a good deal of drill work is necessary. It is only after sufficient practice, after the technique of writing has been mastered, that free composition can be attempted. In the beginning, therefore, composition will be of the controlled type, being limited to reproductions of the textual matter slightly altered or following rigidly the plan revised and approved by the teacher.
- (4) *Interest* : In organizing the written work of the pupils our main consideration should be to enlist their interest. The selection of topics and their treatment shall be such as would appeal to them.
- (5) *Correlation with Grammar* : Wherever possible frequent cross-references between the topic for discussion and the grammar portion being taught should be made, e. g. turning a dialogue into a continuous narrative and vice versa, writing a story in the first Person or the third Person, transformation of sentences, the correct sequence of tense in telling a story, etc.
- (6) *Correlation with literature* : Occasionally a good model prose piece may be selected for intensive

study in the class-room, reduced to its skeleton and utilized for imitative effort based upon it. This is possible only in the highest standard.

Forms of written composition

(1) *The Essay*—This is of various types. A classification of these is attempted below

(a) Simple descriptions attempted in the Junior stage, description of animals, objects, persons, scenes, processes,—‘A Cat,’ ‘A Camel,’ ‘A Dog,’ ‘My School,’ ‘A Foot-ball,’ ‘A Fair,’ ‘A Garden,’ ‘A Postman,’ ‘A Policeman,’ ‘A Street Scene,’ ‘The Post Office,’ ‘The Railway Station,’ ‘Our Cricket Match,’ etc. These topics are suited to pupils in standards I to III

(b) The Descriptive essay. The following subdivisions are made for the sake of convenience only —

(i) *Visits*—‘A visit to a place of historical interest,’ ‘A visit to an interesting place,’ ‘A visit to a place of religious interest,’ ‘A visit to an exhibition,’ ‘A railway journey,’ ‘My trip to ,’

(ii) *Descriptions*—‘A cricket Match,’ ‘The Taj Mahal,’ ‘The Fort of Sinbad,’ ‘View from the the Parvati Hill,’ ‘A walk on sea-shore,’ and the like

(iii) *Description of seasonal changes*.—‘A Rainy day,’ ‘An autumn stroll,’ ‘A summer evening,’ ‘A walk in the moonlight,’ ‘My favourite season,’ ‘An evening walk in summer,’ ‘An early morning walk,’ etc

(iv) *Description of incidents and scenes*—‘A

house on fire', 'A street accident', 'A street fight', 'The main street of your town'

- (v) *Description of unpressions gathered during a short time*—the 'Half an hour at' type e g 'Half an hour at the railway platform', 'Half an hour at a bus stand', 'Half an hour in a book-stall', 'Half an hour in a tea-shop'

- (vi) *Description of persons*—pen pictures—'The Hawker', 'The Coolie', 'The Snake-charmer', 'The Conjuror', 'The beggar boy', 'A road-side beggar', 'A street singer', 'The Chinese silk vendor', 'The Tongwallah', 'The School peon', 'Lobby-my Dog', 'The fortune-teller'

(c) *Autobiographies*—

- (i) *Autobiographies of animate objects*,—'a horse', 'a parrot', 'a street dog', 'a circus lion', 'a donkey', 'a bullock', 'a silkworm', 'a butterfly'

- (ii) *Autobiographies of inanimate objects*,—'a fountain pen', 'a watch', 'a river', 'a pearl', 'a five-rupee note', 'an old pair of shoes', 'a tower clock', 'an old volume', 'a motor car', 'a radio', 'a bicycle', 'a lamp post', 'a rain coat', 'an old fort', 'an aeroplane', 'a submarine', 'the year 1940'

- (d) *Biographies*—'Your favourite hero in History', 'A Living Indian author', 'An Indian scientist', 'An Indian social reformer', 'Your favourite character'

- (e) *Imaginative*—'If I were a king', 'If I

were the head master of my school', 'If I were a dictator', 'If I were an Indian prince', 'If I were some one in particular', 'If I were a millionaire', 'A trip to the Moon'.

- (f) Reflective—'The Reading habit', 'Pleasures of reading', 'The right use of leisure', 'Marvels of Science', 'Walking tour', 'Hobbies', 'Your favourite hobby', 'A pleasure trip', 'Manners', 'Are we happier than our forefathers?', 'Which is greater—knowledge or power?', 'Habits', 'Strikes', 'Advertisements', 'Evils of Drink', 'Village uplift', 'School magazines', 'Compulsory military service', 'The choice of profession', 'The Diary habit', 'Broadcasting', 'The value of discipline', 'On keeping pets'.

The above list is not exhaustive.

- (g) Stories—These may be from the text or told by the teacher. In the higher standards some of the longer stories may be summarised.

(2) Letters—The following types should be attempted—

- (i) Personal letters—to friends, relatives and acquaintances.
- (ii) Letters of congratulation and condolence.
- (iii) Official letters—to the Headmaster of a school, the District Superintendent of Police, the President of a Municipality, The Divisional Traffic Manager of a Railway Company, The Collector of a District, an official person.
- (iv) Business letters—to Heads of firms, merchants, etc.

- (v) Applications—for advertised posts.
- (vi) Drafting of advertisements. Replies to them.
- (vii) Letters to Newspapers.
- (viii) Letters of introduction, testimonials.

(3) Dialogues. Stories or narratives for other argumentative writing can be presented in the form of dialogue, e.g. 'A dialogue on the relative merits and demerits of Indian and European games.' Almost any theme can be thus presented.

- (4) Paragraphing
- (5) Precise-writing
- (6) Translation exercises.
- (7) Dictation and transcription (Yes! these are included under written composition)

Before turning to the methods to be adopted in the treatment of each of these forms in the classroom, we may note their class-wise distribution.

Standard First To make himself accustomed to the mechanical difficulties incidental to writing, the pupil first writes down words or sentences written on the blackboard by the teacher. He watches the teacher writing them and so can follow the movements involved in the process. This is no more than transcription work and its purpose is to give practice in writing. The pupil is asked to copy down the words in his notebook.

(2) But the unit of thought is the sentence and the pupil will soon learn to make and speak a complete sentence of the simplest type—'This is a book', 'I have two pens', 'John goes to the market'. Such sentences are written on the blackboard by the teacher and are copied by the pupils. Later on, after sufficient practice, pupils may be asked to write down the sentences from memory. The

teacher's help will be required in the matter of spelling and may be given.

(3) Pupils may be asked to write down the names of objects exhibited to them by the teacher. They may then qualify them by providing suitable adjectives, e. g. a *red* pencil; *two* books; a *yellow* banana; a *round* ball.

(4) Writing answers to questions by the teacher, or to questions based on the reader when it is introduced.

(5) Identifying objects in a picture and writing down their names.

(6) Describing actions, e. g. 'Rama *reads* a book.' 'I *open* the door.'

(7) Completion exercises.

(8) Writing a few sentences, not more than four or five, on an object. This will come almost at the end of the school year as this is the pupil's first real attempt at writing unaided by the teacher or his questions.

Standard Second: (1) Answers to questions by the teachers, and based on the reader. (2) Grammatical exercises of the 'Completion' type. (3) Simple description of objects. (4) Writing a simple story from the reader or one told by the teacher. (5) Beginnings of simple letter-writing,—a letter to the mother, brother, father or friend (not more than five or six sentences). (6) Dictation of three or four lines from the text.

Standard Third: (1) Written work connected with textual matter and grammar teaching. (2) Story-writing. A variation may be introduced by requiring the pupils to write down the story in the words of any one participant in it. (3) Description of a picture or a series of pictures (three or four) depicting a continuous story. (4) Simple letters. (5) Simple description of personal experience, e. g. 'What I saw at Bombay', 'Our Trip', 'Our Social', such

descriptions being confined to eight or ten sentences. (6) Transcription and dictation of a short paragraph.

Standard Fourth : (1) Here again the text is the centre of study. Oral practice in the use of the new vocabulary acquired in the study of a lesson furnishes the material for written exercise. (2) Story-writing—all types of variations can be introduced, e.g. in any Person, giving half the story and pupils supplying the rest, giving merely the outline and pupils elaborating it, reconstructing a story or an incident from pictures. (3) Dialogue-writing. (4) Simple descriptions of journeys, visits, incidents, scenes, etc. (5) Simple letters—to relatives and friends. (6) Transcription and dictation. (7) Paraphrasing of the simplest poem in the text. (8) Usual written work connected with grammar teaching.

Standard Fifth : (1) Writing material brought out of the study of the text—answers to questions, summaries of longer stories and poems. (2) Less of story-writing and more of descriptive essays as indicated above. (3) Dialogue-writing, or alternately, turning a dialogue into a continuous narration in the indirect form of speech. (4) Letters—to friends, relatives and acquaintances, invitations and replies, letters of congratulation. (5) Paraphrasing—of simple narrative poems only such as ballads and other descriptive poems. (6) Summaries of books other than the texts. (7) Transcription and dictation. (8) Translation of English passages into vernacular.

Standard Sixth :—(1) Written work connected with the text will now be of a more ambitious nature. Answers to questions, summaries, explanations, arguments for and against a view, etc. (2) Precis-writing introduced,—precis of stories and descriptive passages only in the beginning. (3) Paraphrasing. (4) The Essay—descriptive types, autobiographies, pen pictures, and one or two of the 'reflective' type.

(5) Dialogue-writing, though there is a tendency to discontinue this form of composition after the fifth standard. Perhaps its omission from the Matriculation English paper explains it. (6) Letters—personal letters, letters to strangers, letters of congratulation and condolence, business letters. (7) Transcription and dictation. (8) Translation of English passages into vernacular and vice versa.

Standard Seventh : (1) Summaries of chapters and longer poems from the text, explanations with context of textual matter. (2) The Essay—all types of descriptive essays, non-pictures, autobiographies, biographies, imaginative essays, reflective essays. (3) Letters—those specified for standard sixth with the addition of official letters, applications, advertisements and replies to them, telegrams, letters to newspapers. (4) Precise-writing—of descriptive and argumentative passages. (5) Paraphrasing. (6) Translation of vernacular passages into English and vice versa.

Methods of Treatment in the Classroom.

(1) *Stories* This topic is treated at length in chapter IX, "Stories and how to tell them." Before the pupils write down the story it should be fully discussed in the class. The teacher either tells it (sometimes with constant reference to a picture or a series of pictures) himself or asks the boys to read one from the book. In the lower standards all the difficult words should have been previously introduced. Then follow questions and answers. The story is elicited from the boys either in whole or in parts. It is retold by one or two good students. The outline is then written on the blackboard by the teacher. The boys now write down the story.

Variations from the normal practice are introduced as the boys progress. If pictures are utilized for telling a story, those depicting the intermediate stages are not exhibited and

the boys are asked to supply the missing part from their imagination. The whole story is pieced together and then written down.

Sometimes only the skeleton of the story is supplied and the pupils are required to expand it. Sometimes the reverse process will also be found instructive. A full-dressed story is presented and an outline of it demanded.

Almost all stories begin in the conventional way, stating the time, place and characters in them, e. g. 'Once upon a time there lived...'; they also have a conventional ending,—"...and they lived happily ever after." But the pupils may also be initiated into the modern practice of beginning the story in the middle or with a striking incident and then revert to the narrative. They should also know that every story must have a title, that it should be divided into convenient paragraphs, and that a judicious use of conversation and local colour will often go a long way to make a story 'sane'.

(2) *Descriptions in the lower standards*: Descriptions of objects, animals, scenes or incidents. The following procedure is suggested, (a) Preliminary oral discussion on the object (either represented directly or indirectly by means of its picture) or its picture. Some of the 'key' words that describe the picture are written on the blackboard. An outline of the description is thus built up on the blackboard. The pupils give out a complete description of the object with the help of the outline. The description is then written down. Before the writing commences, the outline on the blackboard should be either erased or screened from the pupils' view.

(b) A second way is to exhibit the object or its picture and write down a series of questions on the blackboard. These questions are so framed that answers to them when pieced together will form a connected description.

The pupils then arrange these answers in their proper order and the final product is written down. This method may be tried occasionally as an interesting variation from the normal procedure.

(c) A third way is to collect all the words (nouns and verbs) and epithets pertaining to the topic selected. These are written down on the blackboard. The pupils are asked to relate the proper epithet to the proper word, and the proper verb to the proper noun, and thus build up sentences. These sentences are written down on the blackboard. The pupils are then asked to arrange them in their proper sequence.

(d) A fourth way, practicable only in the higher standards is to present a model description by a well-known author and analyse it. The 'key' words, apt epithets and 'good' expressions are isolated, written on the blackboard and discussed. The pupils then are invited to attempt writing in similar vein making use of these words and expressions in their writing. This method should however be only occasionally attempted.

(1) *The Essay :*

The word 'essay' in school terminology is generally used to denote any piece of continuous writing on a topic, the usual length being anything between one to five pages (The Matriculation paper in English lays down the injunction, 'of about 40 lines'). Three pages would appear to be the manageable length and boys should be discouraged from exceeding it.

The problem of essay-writing resolves into these four stages,—(1) Selection of a topic, (2) Collection of relevant material, (3) Arranging the matter collected—making a plan, (4) The structure of the essay—the paragraphs and senten-

ces and (5) Manner of exposition—the language forms employed.

Each of the above stages deserves detailed consideration

(1) *Selection of a topic* Two principles will guide us in the selection of topics, viz (a) they should be definite and concrete and, therefore, interesting to the pupils, (b) they should be such as will not necessitate the use of new and unusual (e.g. technical terms, etc.) vocabulary. The topics should be such on which the pupils will have plenty to write. This is only possible if the topic selected is an interesting one and lies within the range of their experience. "It should challenge interest and stimulate performance. It must bear a real relation to the child's emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual outlook." "Written composition in the past was paralysed owing to the extraordinary themes children were expected to handle. A good composition theme should provoke the child to render up what is in him. Interest is the mainspring of all good work and the absence of it converts work into drudgery. The joy of creating is born out of interest. His best work must come out of himself. Any attempt to thrust an outside point of view upon him is foredoomed to failure. When interest is secured, the child's work begins to come alive. Otherwise it may indeed come to a finish under the sharp spur of necessity but the horse becomes jaded, and the prize is lost. Lack of interest was the weakness of the old composition themes. Many of the present-day themes, which seem to extort information in a less obvious manner, are as dull as the old ones and rather more foolish. Where is the child who really wants to be a boot lace or 'an old pen'?" (Tomkinson)

Morgan gives the following advice to pupils, "Do not attempt to write upon a subject of which you have too little knowledge or experience. Choose that with which you are most familiar." A sound advice.

The moral is,—never ask pupils to write on something which is abstruse. Only what is concrete and related to their cognate experience will arouse any interest in them. Secondly, a topic which requires a special vocabulary will only succeed in diverting energy to the mastering of the new words from what should have been a pleasurable activity. If some new words are considered essential for the theme they should be introduced previously so that the actual discussion on the topic may proceed unhindered.

(2) *Collection of relevant material.* Tomkinson raises the questions, 'How far is it legitimate to help the child to his material and—a much more important question—how can he be helped to gather such material?', and quotes Cobbet's facile answer, 'Never write about any matter which you do not well understand. If you clearly understand all about your matter, you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words. The order of the thoughts will be, in almost all cases, that of your thoughts. Sit down to write what you have thought, and not to think what you shall write.'

But he realizes that 'unfortunately this is a counsel of perfection,' and that 'if the writing of children were limited to what they 'well understood' their output would be infinitesimal.' We must, therefore, help our pupils to gather material. In what way? The method to be followed at this stage is discussed in detail on pp. 21-31, "The 'put the topic in the centre' way of approach." Put briefly, it is,—(1) Put the topic in the centre, think round it, and collect all the 'points' that occur to you. (2) Choose the particular aspect from which you wish to treat the subject. Select those points which are in sympathy with the aspect and reject others. (3) Arrange the material. In no case should a teacher supply his own thoughts to the pupils however dignified they might appear to him and how abso-

lately essential. It is not he who is writing the essay but the pupils. They will supply all the material which their experience will suggest them and that ought to satisfy him. (see pp. 33-40 "Thought and Style in the essay.")

(3) *Arranging the matter collected, making a plan.* This is the most vital part of the business of essay-writing and unfortunately the least appreciated by the teachers and still less by the pupils. Even the most valuable material will be wasted if not presented in an orderly fashion. "The facts must be marshalled, the ideas arranged in proper order and sequence, and correct balance preserved so that each part of the subject receives the attention due to it." After all, all written work, it is pertinent to assume, is meant to be read and if we do not present it in such a logical manner as will be readily followed and understood by the reader we have failed in our purpose. We must visualise ourselves in the place of the reader, analyse his thinking process and shape our writing accordingly. Order in presentation is of first-rate importance from the point of view of the reader, for that makes it easier for him to follow you. "The orderly arrangement of material is of extraordinary importance in writing and the secret of a good order lies in the mastery of the paragraph. Inconsequence, either of matter or manner, is fatal, it dissipates both the writer's strength and the reader's interest. The reader is not sure of his whereabouts and is apt to suspect that the author is equally uncertain." Quintilian is quoted in this connection as saying, "Care should be taken not that the reader may understand if he will, but that he must understand whether he will or not."

The pupils, therefore, after the material has been collected and sifted, should be invited to arrange it in a logical order. Certain ideas will be found to group themselves together. Some of these groups will claim precedence over others which in their turn will appear to grow out of others

All this work is to be done by the pupils with the minimum of help from the teacher. The first draft or plan will thus be evolved. The first draft by the pupils will rarely be satisfactory and after discussion with and correction by the teacher a second will be prepared. The whole essay will thus be sketched in outline and the pupils will now be ready to write the essay. This is the time to think out any similes, parallels, examples or illustrations with which to elaborate the points included in the plan.

Always insist on pupils submitting their plans. No essay should be entertained the plans for which were not submitted. Pupils' work will always read better if plans for it were previously submitted and approved.

The left-hand page of pupil's exercise book should be utilized for the preliminary *spade work*—writing down the material collected, arranging it, making the first draft, and, after its revision, the second. "When the plan is used it should be entered on the opposite page to that on which the written work begins. The workshop page is as essential to the writing book as the margin is to the exercise book in arithmetic. In addition to the plan, false starts, alternative expressions, trial phrases, spelling guesses, in short all the debris of writing which otherwise would be surreptitiously littered on the blotting paper or desk, should find a recognized home on the workshop page. This practice will be found to justify itself in neater phrasing and a higher general level of work." (Tomkinson)

Assuming now that the pupil is in possession of the plan, we will set him to the final task,—writing the essay. We thus come to the fourth stage—

(4) *Comprehending the structure of the essay*,—the beginning, the middle, and the ending, paragraphing. Pupils should be given the idea that all essays have (i) Beginnings, (ii) Middles, and (iii) Endings. In fact their plans will

reflect this arrangement, or rather should be made to do so. The next important thing is paragraphing. Each important point in the plan will merit a paragraph devoted to it exclusively. "In essence a paragraph is an essay in miniature and should be as carefully constructed as the work of which it forms a part." Moreover, the paragraphs should be so related to one another that they form a regular sequence. "The unit of argument is the paragraph. Each paragraph deals with one particular aspect of the subject, and is frequently introduced by Topic sentences in which the key of the paragraph is to be found stated with boldness and brevity. Moreover, the end of the paragraph often contains a suggestion, if not explicitly, an introduction to the next paragraph and so reinforces that strength of paragraph sequence which comes from a proper ordering of the subject-matter" (Tomkinson).

Pupils should be trained in the practice of paragraph writing as soon as they are able to write on any subject. "Even in the lower classes children should be instructed to begin a new line whenever their subject divides itself afresh."

Sometimes an interesting variation from the normal procedure will be to study the various paragraphs of a well-written essay, give them their appropriate headings and thus prepare an outline. It is a revealing exercise.

Lastly, the title of the essay should be ever present before the pupils. It sets the limit to the essay and prevents digressions. Titles and their scope should be definite. "Indefinite titles invite spiritless compositions, so do titles of an encyclopaedic nature." The teacher himself, when setting a theme, should be clear in his mind as to what he expects from his class and intimate it accordingly. "Consider carefully what the topic is, and stick to it."

(5) *Manner of exposition*.—The language employed, the beginning, and the end. When the plan of the essay is ready and the contents and arrangement of the paragraphs

worked out, the last thing that remains is to fill in the outline,—to write the essay.

The essay may be *begun* in any one of the several now conventional ways, with—(i) a personal experience, (ii) an anecdote, (iii) reference to an accepted opinion, (iv) a quotation, (v) some striking incident, (vi) a definition of the topic, and (vii) speaking about the subject in a general way, about some general principle pertinent to the topic. It will be found that no general rule can be laid down as regards any one particular way always going with any particular topic. General suitability and appropriateness will in the last resort determine any particular manner of approach. Models illustrating each of the above-mentioned approaches should be read out to the pupils and studied so that the pupils become acquainted with their use.

The *ending* must be striking. The last sentence is of the utmost importance. It is, however, idle to expect too much of our pupils in this direction. Some striking endings however, should be read out in the class.

Conciseness should be studied. Mere verbosity and 'loose sally of the mind' lead us nowhere. Brevity is the hall mark of good writing. It is a difficult virtue to cultivate and much time must be expended to acquire it. Paradoxically enough, it requires more time to say a thing in fewer words than in more words. Tomkinson quotes Pascal who 'confessed that he wrote long letters because he had no time to write short ones'. Writing at length without giving it thought is the line of least resistance for a writer whereas an attempt to express the fact in fewer words requires careful consideration involving much 'pruning'. Prolixity in a writer is tedious to the reader. "In the end this kind of writing defeats itself. The literary craft-man conveys more by his silences, than inferior writers do by speech. He is aware that the half is better than the whole. He leaves

blanks for the reader's imagination to fill in and makes a skilful use of suggestion. It is a wasteful writer who builds entirely out of his own head". These are spacious virtues. We cannot hope to inculcate them in our pupils in the very limited time available to us. But we can, at any rate, make them aware of their existence.

Lastly, about the style. It is a difficult word to use in connection with school writing. We cannot expect any thing in this way of our pupils. This view is discussed on pp. 21-4, 'Thought and Style in the essay'. If the pupils write in correct simple English and present their thoughts in an orderly manner, it ought to satisfy us. However, the following points deserve consideration,—

(1) The unit of thought is the sentence. Sentences make a paragraph and paragraphs make the essay. The sentence, therefore, should be so constructed that it appeals to the reader and holds his interest. There are three kinds of sentences, the Loose sentence, the Periodic sentence, and the Balanced sentence. The following sentences illustrate them.

(a) The Loose sentence,—I borrowed from my friend his copy of Boswell which was to be returned when I had read it.

(b) The Periodic sentence,—‘To those who are accustomed to live under modern conditions and who are ignorant of how our forefathers ate and drank and prayed and conducted their daily business, this glimpse into the past will be revealing.’

(c) The Balanced sentence,—‘For prosperity doth best discover vice, but Adversity doth best discover Vertue’ (Bacon)

It will be realized that in the ‘Loose’ sentence the thought is announced immediately, in the first clause, the remaining clauses being chained on to it. In the ‘Periodic’ sentence the main thought is reserved until late in the sentence. In the ‘Balanced’ sentence the statement in the

first part is balanced by that in the second. In the 'Loose' sentence the reader's interest or curiosity wanes when the main thought is announced, in the 'Periodic', it is sustained to the end because the sense is not complete till the conclusion is reached. By the comparison of 'Loose' and 'Periodic' sentences and their subsequent analysis, pupils should be helped to realize that to arouse and sustain the interest of the reader the latter type is preferable to the first and in consequence should be adopted. The third type, 'the Balanced sentence' is too difficult for our pupils to master.

(2) Though no conscious attempt at imitating a style should be made by Indian high school pupils, they should be made wiser on these points—(i) Use a short word for a long one (ii) Prefer the concrete to the abstract. (iii) Prefer the Anglo-saxon word to the Latin one (iv) Prefer the Active voice to the Passive (v) Be simple and direct. Compare the two expressions provided by Tomkinson, both meaning the same thing, 'And God said, Let there be light and there was light,' and 'Let us have an economical and efficient lighting apparatus, and so finally, a method of illumination was installed.' Comment is superfluous "Call spade a spade, rarely a shovel, never an agricultural implement"

The writing of an essay, thus in the main, involves the orderly presentation of material in simple, correct English. Plans have to be made and revised. This takes time. A fewer number of essays, written on these lines, are much better than the impossible host of the odd 23 or 30 a year which the Educational Department enjoins on schools. It is useless to make pupils write an essay a week if they are not first asked to collect the material, arrange it, prepare the plan, (all by themselves) get it corrected and revised, submit a second one, and finally write the essay. Assuming that a normal class consists of forty pupils, it would be physically

impossible for the already overworked teacher to go through the plans of all the pupils, revise them, and correct the written essays. What is at present happening is that the pupils are given a topic, they listen to the exposition by the teacher and write down the essay, all within three quarters of an hour! This is no essay-writing. Every work connected with the essay-writing must be done by the pupils themselves. Personally, I would be satisfied if my class writes only three essays per term. "Since essays generally need preparation, and the pupil's first draft can rarely be accepted, they should not be set frequently, two or three a term, written after careful preparation, and scrupulously corrected and discussed, are of higher value than a perfunctory weekly essay." (*'Suggestions'*)

"The practice of setting a regular weekly essay on some formal subject is, in the opinion of the Committee, wrong, one set sometime previously and at more infrequent intervals, and carefully corrected, is of far more use. Several advocate the careful thinking out of a list of essays for the term and the giving of the list to the form in advance." (*'Memorandum'*)

Should a composition exercise be written in school or at home? Some of the pupils very appreciate the freer atmosphere of the home and write better than under tension in the artificial atmosphere of the school. Besides, it is cruel to expect a pupil to 'produce' a composition written in a period of forty-five minutes at most. Consider what he has to do, he has to start right from the collection of material and work his way to the final writing. Hence subjects for composition should be announced to the pupils at least a week before they are due for writing. "It is unfair, to say the least, for us to expect good compositions written on the spur of the moment. Which of us could do it ourselves? No

unreasonable time-limit should therefore be assigned to a composition." (Finch)

The following is a suggested classroom procedure for an essay period —

(i) Announcing the topic by the teacher. (ii) Collecting of the material by the pupils themselves, the teacher's part being limited to throwing out suggestions and administering 'pushes' where the thinking activity is in danger of stalling. (iii) Arranging the material by the pupils, preparing the plan and submitting it to the teacher. (iv) Teacher's revision of the plan. (v) Resubmitting the revised plan by the pupils and getting it approved. (vi) Determining the paragraphs and their arrangement, the beginning, the middle, and the ending, the opening for the essay. (vii) Writing down the essay.

(2) Letters

(1) *Value of letter-writing* (a) Children love to write letter. They see their elders do it and like to emulate them. There is a peculiar fascination in feeling 'grown up'. (b) The communicative urge in the children is satisfied when they possess a medium to communicate their feelings and thoughts to others. (c) It is a most valuable equipment for life. The utilitarian value is great. There are scores of occasions on which the child will be called upon to write letters, personal, business, official or formal. In these days of stress and strife the 'bread and butter' value of letter-writing has considerably appreciated. Almost every boy will have to conduct the simple business correspondence which is part and parcel of the daily life of every one of us. And even if all are not destined to become clerks it is advisable that a knowledge of the usual forms of correspondence demanded by the modern conditions

under which we live should be imparted. No boy or girl should leave school without knowing how to write simple formal letters on matters of personal and public business.

Because of the joy it gives to the children and its value in life, letter-writing should be begun earliest in school life—from standard II—and continued throughout.

(2) *Topics for letter-writing* “The subjects and occasions on which letters are written in school should always be such as will occur in real life. To compel a child to throw a composition on a subject into the form of a letter is to render the exercise ridiculous”. (*‘Suggestions’*) It is no use making pupils write letters the like of which they will never in their life be called upon to write. What are such topics? Finch gives a useful list,—(i) Simple home letters, conveying little news of school, of holidays, of prize-givings, and the like. (ii) Birthday letters to relatives and friends. (iii) Letters of simple thanks to parents and friends for birthday and other presents. (iv) Letters of greeting and good wishes. (v) Little invitations to parties, concerts, and other functions. (vi) Very simple letters of excuse or apology to the teacher or some other person. (vii) To the headmaster asking for leave of absence, or for a certificate on leaving the school. To a tradesman ordering goods to be delivered. (viii) Answer to an advertisement. (ix) Request to a famous man to preside at a school function. (x) Request to the railway authorities for concession in fares. To this list of topics and occasions which touch the life of children, may be added another of topics which they will need later on, e.g. letters of condolence, business letters, official letters, and letters to newspapers. There is also the imaginative letter supposed to be written to a fictitious person on some imaginary topic.

(3) *Types of Letters* (See pp 21-2)

the technical part of the essay, the contents of the letter being left to the pupils to supply (iv) Addressing the envelope (this, too, is studied from specimens)

(3) *Precis-writing*

(A) *Value of precis writing*—The word 'Precis' which is a French word denotes in English an abstract, a summary, a digest, an epitome. Ability to make a good precis is a valuable asset to a student, a Government official, a professional or a business man. Precis writing, therefore, is a most valuable exercise. The value of precis writing is indicated by some of the claims put forward on its behalf,—(1) It is a training in intellect and appreciation. The ability of distinguishing the essential from the non-essential and of grasping the true relationship of ideas which, though pertinent to the issue, are nevertheless of varying importance, is a valuable gain. It is a training in mental discrimination and judgment and in clearness and precision in speech and writing. A sense of relative values is generated which will stand a person in good stead throughout his life. (ii) It is also a training in good writing. "The power to select with sound judgment, to appreciate logical and balanced argument and arrangement, to view the whole and shape its unity results in the power to write well expressed, well co-ordinated, coherent and homogenous piece of English prose." It tends to correct loose expression and sloppiness of style. (iii) It is a training in literary appreciation. The careful study of the better kinds of passages set forth for the precis is education in literary appreciation. Not only is one brought in company of great passages but in their analysis he comes to evaluate them by the canons of brevity, accuracy, order, and exposition. (iv) It promotes concentration, clear thinking and concise expression. (v) From the purely utilitarian

(4) *Some important considerations in connection with letter-writing* (1) Make the exercise interesting to the pupil. He will find it interesting if he feels it worth-while. He will not feel it worth his while if he feels no necessity for it. There is no urge if there is no motivation. Motivation is secured if the activity approaches as closely to reality as possible. How to secure this reality? In the first place take advantage of every occasion which presents an opportunity to pupils for writing real letters. Let such letters be actually posted. "But it must be a real letter. It must be put in a real envelope, and it must actually be sent to a real person. If possible, it should actually be stamped and posted." It is a good plan if arrangements are made for the exchange of letters between the pupils of one school and another. Or, the pupils in the higher forms may write letters to those in the lower ones. Personal letters, those to parents, friend, should be actually sent to the addressees. When it is a real letter and when there is a real occasion for writing it, the greatest difficulty—the want of something to say—will vanish. Whenever the teacher wishes his pupils to write a letter, he should wait for the suitable occasion. It is only then that the pupils will really have something to say that they consider important enough. (2) The language of the letter must be simple, homely, natural. Write as you would speak to the person were he in your presence. Mr. Lay gives the following mnemonic verse—

"One day Maria wanted to write a letter to her sister but she did not know what to say. Her mother gave her good advice which you will find in the rhyme—

"Maria intended a letter to write,
But could not begin (as she thought) to indite,
So went to her mother with pencil and slate,
Continuing "Dear Sister," and also a date

message is found; the formal invitations are quite matter-of-fact; the official letter begins in a particular way and is as unemotional as the Sphinx; an application must contain all the details concerning age, qualifications, experience, references etc.

In the matter of learning to write letters children must have models to go by.

Occasionally, letters by famous men should be read out and these will be appreciated. They must, however, be on suitable subjects. Cowper, Charlotte Brontë, Scott, Lamb, Abraham Lincoln (Lincoln's letter of condolence to a widow 'who had so costly a sacrifice at the altar of freedom' is great) Madame de Sévigné, are all great letter scribes and a selection from their letters will be found to be delectable reading. Of course, the leisurely, delightfully intimate, amblyog letter (written on a scroll with a real quill) of the pre-Victorian era, when life was unhurried and living gracious, has vanished. The introduction of the penny-post, the quickened means of communication, the possibility of frequent meetings, and what is more, the absence of that leisure have conspired to kill it.

(5) *Procedure for a lesson in letter-writing* —

(1) Present a specimen (if possible, have cyclostyled copies distributed so that each pupil has a copy). Let the class study it carefully. (ii) By means of questions draw its attention to the various details—spacing, punctuation, use of capital letters, address, ending, the terminology employed,—e.g. 'Where is the letter written from?' 'Who is the writer of the letter?' 'To whom is it addressed?' 'What is the letter about?', 'What things are mentioned in the letter?' 'How does it begin, how does it end?' One or two additional specimens are provided and discussed. Pupils note down the information. (iii) The pupils are now ready to write a letter on similar lines on a topic suggested by the teacher. This imitation, of course, will be limited to

'I will give you a rule,' said her mother, 'my dear,
 Just think for a moment your sister is here,
 And what would you tell her? consider, and then,
 Though silent your tongue, you can speak with
 your pen'

This is splendid advice for a letter writer. Thank you are talking to your friend and write what you think. Unfortunately our pupils know very little of natural, colloquial English, thanks to their teachers who are equally ignorant, and in consequence even their letters are written in a heavy, bookish idiom. Even when writing business letters the meaningless business jargon should be cut out and good clear, simple English should be employed. Why must people continue to find 'pleasure in acknowledging your esteemed communication of even date' when they can as well write 'we received your letter'? (iii) The technicalities of letter-writing should be clearly explained—the date, spacing, correct forms of superscription and subscription, the correct addressing of envelopes. Definite instructions are necessary. Specimen letters should be supplied or a specimen written on the blackboard and the pupils invited to study it carefully and note down how 'the thing is done'. Various specimens should be examined and a generalisation arrived at. Of course, one type of letter at a time should be dealt with, for these details vary from type to type. (iv) Whenever it is desired to introduce an as yet unfamiliar type, present various specimens of it and let pupils study them. The usual layout and the dominant characteristics of the type should then be discussed, e.g.—in the personal, intimate letter the writer is most homely, writes in the most casual way, refers to children and their idiosyncrasies, in a letter of condolence three distinct stages can be marked—in the first stage grief and shock at the news are conveyed, in the second the dead is eulogised, and in the third a heartening

message is found, the formal invitations are quite matter-of-fact, the official letter begins in a particular way and is as unemotional as the Sphinx, an application must contain all the details concerning age, qualifications, experience, references etc.

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point of view it has its business value in commercial houses, Government offices, the newspaper offices, and wherever precise writing is needed. Reports of business meetings, reports and proceedings of public meetings or sessions of legislative bodies such as the municipality, the Parliament, local authorities etc., journalistic reports, minutes of evidence, official documents, statistics, lengthy letters or correspondence, all call for 'punning' the none-such, and concise presentation. The ability to prepare such abstracts is an essential qualification for reporters, clerks, secretaries, and their like. Since not only the boys, and for that matter girls too, will be seeking careers in the office, business houses etc., a knowledge of precis-writing should form an essential part of the school curriculum. (vi) Ability to make a precis is the first test of a pupil's ability to understand a passage. (vi) A knowledge of precis-writing will prove of great value to a student proceeding to the university. Taking down notes of the professor's lectures, summarising books of reference, involve a process that is akin to that demanded by a precis.

(B) *Material for precis-writing* (i) Only the best that English literature has to offer should be selected. (ii) Both writings and speeches have claim for inclusion. (iii) The passages should be on a variety of subjects and in a variety of style. "They may be from biographies, speeches, art, science, history, politics, literature even religion and philosophy. (iv) Sometimes an analysis and precis by a pupil of his own essay will be found a valuable exercise.

(C) *Organisation of the subject* gradation (i) The oral precis should come first. Boys may be asked to give out summaries of what they have read and written. The teacher can elicit the summary by three or four suitable questions. The pupils then piece these answers together and the oral summary is thus made. (ii) Because precis making is a diffi-

cult art to acquire requiring a good deal of practice over a considerable period it should be begun early in school course and not be reserved for the university examination year only or the year preceding it as happens to be the prevalent practice with most schools. Oral precis (it first preceded by the teacher's questions) should be begun from the third standard and the written exercise from the fifth. (ii) Oral discussion may precede the writing of the exercise, especially in the beginning. But in the topmost class, the entire work,—reading the passage silently, marking the important points, making a skeleton sketch and the first draft, and writing the first precis,—should be done by the pupils themselves. The teacher's part in this business is strictly limited to correcting and revising the drafts submitted by the pupils and making suggestions where called for. For the understanding of difficult or unusual words pupils should be asked to refer to a dictionary (it is important that every pupil possesses one). It is only then that the pupils will learn to be self-reliant and work their way unaided. (iii) The material should be carefully graded. Narrative passages and dialogues will come in the beginning (standards third, fourth and fifth), narrative and descriptive in fifth and sixth, and passages of exposition and argument in the seventh. (iv) Passages for precis-making should not be unduly long and should be such as would admit of condensation. I have seen passages set for precis-writing which contained one single idea worked out to the end with numerous illustrations and restatements, or which gave a long tedious list of something or other. Precis in such cases cannot go beyond a sentence or two. (v) The required length should be indicated.

(D) *Characteristics of a good precis.* (i) It should conform strictly to the limit set. (ii) Its chief qualities are clearness and terseness. It should contain all the essential points. Nothing unimportant should be included. Every word

counts. 'The wheat must be sifted from the chaff'. (iii) The final product must be a 'plain, unvarnished, well-balanced summary. It should not be so compact as to consist of a mere list of points or headings. It should be 'readable and consecutive'. It should read as an original passage. The points must be arranged in their proper sequence. (iv) It should be in the precis-writer's own words. The actual words of the passage should never be used. (v) All figures of speech, illustrations, examples, analogies should be omitted; adjectives and other qualifying words are unnecessary. Direct speech is turned into indirect. It should be written in the third Person and the past tense throughout. Clauses are often reduced to phrases and phrases to single words. (vi) It should contain nothing that is not in the original. No comments are made or no views expressed on the subject-matter of the passage.

(E) *Classroom procedure* : The passage is presented. It is much better if each pupil possesses a text-book containing suitable passages for precis-writing. Writing down the passage on the blackboard wastes much valuable time. The pupils read the passage. If considered necessary the teacher may read it aloud. (i) Careful study of the passage by the pupils (silently) It will often be found necessary to read the passage two or three times over. Pupils should be instructed to refer to their dictionaries for difficult words. During this silent reading, they should be instructed to look for the general idea discussed—the title. They may be told that the main idea in a paragraph is usually stated in the beginning or at the end. (ii) Pupils write down on the 'workshop page' the title — 'what it is all about' — and 'how it is worked out'—the main headings and sub-headings. This is the most important stage. The main task here is to select the essential points and leave out the non-essential,—a sort of winnowing process. How should this be done? In-

truct them that all figures of speech, illustrations, analogies, adjectives, in fact, all 'padding' should be cut out. The first draft is made, if necessary with reference to the original. It is of the utmost importance that pupils should not write a single word unless they understand what the passage is about. If no title is provided the pupils should supply one. The pupil will be greatly helped in understanding the passage and extracting the necessary information from it if he studies it in the light of these three questions, 'What is the passage about?', 'What is said about it?', 'How is it said?' (iv) The original passage is now put aside and the first draft carefully revised. Further condensation would in all probability be necessary. So some of the sentences are recast and clauses changed into phrases or even single word substitutions. A second draft is made and submitted to the teacher. He should insist on the presentation of these drafts and should refuse to entertain any improvised précis for which no draft was previously submitted and approved. (v) Determining the length of the précis and writing it from the revised draft in the pupil's own words. No laborious calculation of all the words in the passage is necessary. An approximate number is arrived at by multiplying the number of lines by the number of words in any one line and dividing the product by three. This does not take more than thirty seconds. The final précis of the required length is written in a connected way and a title provided. The third Person and the past tense are used throughout.

It is essential that the pupils should be trained to understand the passage, prepare a draft, and write down the final précis all by themselves, unaided by the teacher. This ability will only be acquired by long practice which alone creates habits. The teacher therefore should leave the pupils alone

meditating silently upon the passage and only offer help where the thinking process of the pupils appears to be freezing.

A rather mechanical method, which almost ensures that the precis shall not exceed the limit imposed and at the same time include all the essentials, deserves consideration. I have tried it time and again and it has never once failed to yield very satisfactory results. It is this,—(i) Calculate the number of words in the original passage and divide one-third of this number by 15. The quotient gives you the number of points you should have in your draft. (ii) Divide the number of words which limit your precis by four and the quotient gives you the total number of words in your draft. (iii) When the draft is ready expand each point four times the number of words it contains and write down the precis, which will automatically be of the required length. You cannot go wrong. An example will make the point clear. (i) Suppose the passage consists of 600 words. One-third of this number, which is 200, is the limit for the precis. (ii) Divide 200 by 15. The resulting quotient is 13. You will therefore have 13 points in your draft. (iii) Divide 200 by 4. The quotient 50 gives you the total number of words in your draft. Each point will thus consist of about four or five words. (iv) When writing the precis expand each point about four or five times the number of words it contains,— $(4 \times 1) \times 1$ or 5×1 . The final precis will thus be of approximately 200 words.

The figures 15 and 4 are 'magic' figures and entirely arbitrary and empirical. But the system works.

(4) *Paraphrasing*

The place of paraphrasing in the teaching and appreciation of poetry has already been noted—(see chap. XXIII, 'The Teaching of Poetry,' pp. 160-162)

Paraphrasing means expressing the meaning of prose or poetry in plain simple English. It is therefore in a sense translating. The following points in connection with paraphrasing should be considered.

(A) *Aim in paraphrasing* (i) The main aim in setting pupils to paraphrase a poem is to test whether they have understood it. It is merely a test of comprehension. (ii) The second aim is to provide an exercise in language. The pupils have to understand the poem first and render its meaning in their own words. The poem has to be taken line by line, synonyms found for difficult words and certain expressions elaborated to bring out their meaning. It involves the quest for the right word or phrase which most nearly approaches the meaning of the original. The pupils have to draw upon their vocabulary and put it to active use. Other than the two aims of testing comprehension and expression, paraphrasing can have no third aim.

(B) *Paraphrasing and Appreciation: its place in the teaching of poetry* Paraphrasing is no substitute for appreciation. It does not help in the appreciation of a poem. (i) It cannot elaborate the poet's thoughts and suggestions which he has compressed in so few words. Appreciation means the fullest realization of these. (ii) It concentrates on the meaning of the words in a narrow sense (you need only to find synonyms for them) and makes the readers ignore the beauty of the rhythm and sound. (iii) The prose version which paraphrasing attempts is inferior to the original. The poet has expressed the best thought in the best words possible; you cannot improve upon him. Indeed, paraphrasing has been described as expressing in one's own words something that another has said very much better in his. (iv) There are certain passages in prose and verse that almost defy paraphrase. They must be fully discussed and

appreciated silently. Any attempt to recast them would only amount to their caricature.

(C) *Value of paraphrasing* Though paraphrasing has no place in the teaching and appreciation of poetry, as an exercise in language its value is undoubted. (i) It involves a careful reading of the passage or verse to be paraphrased and compels the reader to ascertain the exact meaning of the author. (ii) It is to be looked upon (for the Indian pupils at least) as an exercise in written composition compelling them to make an active use of their vocabulary. It thus provides further practice in the use of the language. (iii) The search for the right word and the correct expression are a literary training. Word-study thus gains in significance. (iv) The essential difference between poetry and prose is brought out.

(D) *Select on of poems for paraphrasing* Which poems should be selected? All whose opinions count agree that— (i) Poetry for formal paraphrasing should not be chosen from the greatest and noblest passages, i.e., those having great beauty or setting forth some exalted theme. For one thing they defy paraphrase and for another it would be a sacrilege to drag them down from what is sublime to the level of the vulgar and the profane. (Mr. Champion, however holds a different view. "It is one of the best tests of the student's knowledge of English and of his ability to use English. It is practised far too little in schools, the objection is sometimes made that to paraphrase a fine passage merely spoils it. This need not be so. A good paraphrase is a piece of good simple prose with a beauty of its own. And it does not matter if we spoil a certain amount of fine poetry and prose in teaching English, as we spoil much wood in teaching carpentry.") (ii) Too simple or too difficult poems should not be set, for, in the case of the former, paraphrasing would be merely juggling with

words and in the latter a complete failure as the pupils will not have understood them. (iii) If paraphrasing is to be used as an exercise in language,—as an exercise in translation,—it is best to set passages from archaic and diffuse prose or poetry and ask pupils to render them in modern simple English. Specimens of verbose, ‘barl’ writing, fit to be consigned to the chamber of literary horror, may be selected and translated into simple English. (iv) Poems whose emotional correlates lie beyond the experience or knowledge of pupils should never be set. They will not be understood. Again, “poetry which needs elaborate explanation or which does not spring from universal and simple emotion should not be set for study in secondary schools.” There are very many English poems which are too difficult for our Indian pupils to understand owing to the ‘obscurity in language, difficulty in the thought or sentiments or associations expressed.’ “Applying these criteria to the selection of verse contained in readers commonly used in secondary schools, we shall find that much is beyond the range of appreciation of the pupils.” (Champion)

(II) *Place of paraphrasing in the curriculum:* Begin early. In the beginning simple sentences may be paraphrased orally. A compact sentence, a couplet of verse are given for oral paraphrasing. This is a valuable exercise in sentence construction and use of vocabulary. A beginning of this kind is made in the fourth standard. In the fifth standard narrative poems (not the whole poem) are taken up along with sentences which require elaboration. In standard sixth and seventh, descriptive poems and passages or even poems that are ‘reflective’, describing the emotions of the poet, may be set. (u) Pupils should be asked to paraphrase a poem only when they have fully understood it. Paraphrasing should come after the appreciation lesson, as an exercise in the use of language. Hence an unseen poem should

never be set because in that case the task would involve the double work of understanding it and then expressing its content. Paraphrasing implies elaboration of the thought and suggestions in the poem and unless these are fully discussed and understood in the poetry lesson the pupil will not be able to express them. Even in the examination the poem set for paraphrasing should be one which has been previously 'done'. The inclusion in the Matriculation English paper of an unseen poem for paraphrasing is to be deplored, but perhaps examinations are a necessary evil.

(I) *Requirements of a good paraphrase* (i) It is in a way the antithesis of a precis. In a precis we compress thought, in a paraphrase we expand it. Every thought in the original must be expressed clearly and simply. The poem must be taken line by line, stanza by stanza and explained. The meaning of difficult phrases and words must be elaborated. (ii) No new matter should be added in the paraphrase. (iii) Although easier synonyms for difficult words are found out words or constructions which are already simple must not be changed. (iv) The Person and tense of the original are retained. (v) All extravagant figures of speech are eliminated though simple ones may be retained. (vi) There is no limit of words but conciseness should be studied. In dealing with a short poem, a good paraphrase will require about twenty five per cent more words than the poet used, but when a long diffused poem is set the answer must be a summary as well as a paraphrase. (vii) In a short exercise like a paraphrase style and precision of language are important and greatly influence the award of marks. (viii) It should be a 'free' paraphrase showing that you have grasped the general drift of the poet's thought, and not a mechanical paraphrase. The poem should not be reproduced word by word or phrase by phrase but the ideas which the poet has expressed figuratively should be stated in

your own words and in literal terms. A mechanical paraphrase is one which supplies, as far as possible, an equivalent for the original, word by word, e. g.

"That is the wise thrush, he sings each song
twice over

Lest you should think he never could recapture

The first fine careless rapture.

A mechanical paraphrase of the above would be, "That is the prudent thrush, he utters every strain a second time that you may not suppose that he would be unable to reproduce the original, magnificent and spontaneous enthusiasm." There is no credit for this sort of thing. A 'free' paraphrase would be, "Hark! the thrush is singing. Clever fellow, he is afraid that you will think the beauty and spontaneity of his song to be something beyond his knowledge or control. He therefore repeats it, to convince you that the credit of it is really due to him." To take another example,—"The quality of mercy is not strained." A mechanical paraphrase would be, "the nature of clemency is not compelled." A 'free' paraphrase would read, "Mercy has nothing to do with compulsion."

This warning about a mechanical paraphrase is necessary as it has been a common fault of the students to leave the general form and construction of the original and replace them by mere substitutes often more difficult than those replaced. A paraphrase is not a prose order either.

(G) *Classroom procedure* (1) Present the poem. It would be most fitting if it is first discussed in the class. But the exigencies of the examination require that the pupils should be trained in writing the paraphrase of an 'unseen' poem unaided. (2) Instruct the pupils to read the poem over and over again until they have thorough understanding of it,—"*What is it about? What has been said? How has it been said?*"

They are not to write down a word until they understand it (ii) They then define the subject by a general title of their own (not the author's) just as they would do in a precis. (iii) They then make a series of headings or sub-headings. These are only points of treatment or expression. All the points are noted down. The draft is made and submitted to the teacher for approval. (iv) The text is now set aside and the paraphrase is written from the draft in their own words. The usual directions should be given—, that the paraphrase should be twenty-five per cent longer than the original, that a title should be supplied, that it must be in the pupils' own words, that it must be a free and not a mechanical paraphrase, that all extravagant figures of speech should be removed, and that the Person and the tense of the original should be retained.

It will sometimes be found necessary for the teacher to help the pupils to understand the poem. This he may do by certain well-chosen questions which would bring out the general sense of the poem. To obviate this necessity poems which are not difficult should be selected. A few worked-out examples in paraphrasing may be provided just to show 'how the thing is done'.

(5) *The Translation Exercise*

We must consider translation here as an exercise and not as a Method of teaching English. The Translation Grammar Method with its attendant disadvantages has been discussed on pp. 21.

(A) *Types of Translation and their suitability to different standards* Translation as an exercise in language takes two forms, translation from English into vernacular, and from vernacular into English. Translation from the vernacular into English is easier than the reverse type because the pupil

possesses in the vernacular a very much larger range of vocabulary from which to choose words or phrases to express the ideas in the English passage. In the reverse process, translating a vernacular passage into English, he is greatly handicapped by the severely restricted repertoire of words which he can use actively. We must remember that his active writing vocabulary is smaller than his reading one. He can understand a difficult passage in English, his reading vocabulary enables him to do that, but when it comes to compose a sentence in English he finds his writing vocabulary sadly insufficient or unresponsive. Hence, this type should be limited to the highest standard only, for the remaining standards translation into the vernacular should be the only kind that can be demanded.

(B) *The Aim of Translation* We must distinguish between the general aim of translation and the particular one pursued in school. The general aim is to 'secure an exact parallel in the other language', so that there is as little difference between the thought indicated in the original and that in the rendering. It views translation as an art in itself, 'a more or less independent pursuit'. It pitches the standard of excellence very high. But in doing so it assumes a mastery of both the mediums of expression, a thing which is lacking in our pupils. Our 'school' aim, therefore, must be modest. It is to provide further practice in the use of the new language the pupils are learning. We must welcome all those means which provide such a practice and press them into our service. By concentrating attention on the exact meaning of words and expressions translation helps to consolidate them.

Yet another aim is dictated by business considerations. Most of the pupils will be in later life—in offices and business houses,—called upon to do translation work, and hence they should be initiated into this art from their school life.

(C) *Distribution of Translation as an exercise over the school course.* As noted in the beginning translation will be from English into the vernacular except in the two high standards. In the beginning we have only translation of English words and phrases. Then comes translation of sentences, and later on of continuous passages. In the first two standards translation of words and phrases only should be attempted and complete sentences should rarely be set as the intervening of the vernacular would interfere with fixation of the English usage. The aim here is not the assimilation or interpretation of the English word or phrase but to test whether it has been 'digested'. To use the vernacular equivalent to explain the word or phrase or construction would be fatal to its direct association with the idea it represents.

In standards third and fourth complete sentences in English can be presented for translation into the vernacular. The aim here is twofold,—to test whether a difficult sentence has been understood, and to bring out the characteristics of common sentence constructions. The pupils at this stage have acquired some vocabulary and have become familiar with the commoner sentence types. The deliberate presentation of the contrast between the English and the vernacular constructions will act as a 'danger signal', and by emphasizing the ridiculousness of literal translation (e.g. 'Sixteen annas make a rupee' = 'सोळा आणे एका रुपया करतात', 'आज नदीला पुष्कळ पाणी आले आहे' = 'Much water has come to the river today!', 'Good morning, how do you do?' = 'चांगली सकाळ, तुम्ही कसे करता?') focalise attention on the correct English expression and idiom.

Translation also benefits Grammar teaching, particularly the teaching of tenses and the direct and indirect forms of speech. The various tenses and sentence constructions invol-

ving their use are better understood if their vernacular equivalents are placed side by side or pupils asked to provide them. The time-sense or sequence of facts will thus be easily acquired. Pupils should also be made to realise the essential peculiarities of the direct and indirect speech in English which have no satisfactory counterpart in the vernacular. Tenses and pronouns play a large part in such constructions. Ridiculous examples of transliteration should be provided (e.g. 'He said that he would not come that day' = तो म्हणाला की तो त्या दिवशी येणार नाही। which should read 'तो म्हणाला की मी जाऊ येणार नाही') and pupils made to recast them in the correct form.

In the higher standards, fifth, sixth and seventh, continuous passages can be set. If the pupils understand them there will be no difficulty in expressing their content in the vernacular with facility for they can freely draw upon the vernacular for suitable words and ways of expression of which they will have many. Here again, the aim of making pupils translate English passages is to test their comprehension, whether they have understood them. Their reading vocabulary is either augmented or consolidated. Translation may also be utilized in the teaching of grammar—the direct and indirect speech.

In the sixth and the seventh standards translation from vernacular into English may be introduced. Even at this stage it is attended with risk. As an authority states, "Translation into the foreign tongue should not be begun before the pupil has a very fair command of the foreign tongue and would be able to produce the foreign version as an original free composition, it would be best to drop this test out of school examination" (Louis de Glehn). Our pupils have not the 'fair command of the foreign tongue,' and their 'foreign versions' do not read like 'original free compositions.' Besides, as the Direct Method lays down,

thinking in the foreign tongue must be firmly established and encouraged. If the vernacular piece is before the pupils it interferes by its insistent presence with the thinking in the foreign tongue. The vernacular idiom or construction begins to supervene. In expressing the ideas contained in the vernacular passage, pupils begin to make mistakes (the vernacular idiom is staring at them) which they would not make if they were expressing them directly. Louis de Glehn, therefore, suggests that the vernacular passage should be read out very quickly, hurled at them so to speak, and immediately removed. The pupils then should write down in English what they have heard. They have formed a mental picture of what the passage was about and, as the vernacular expressions would not be continuously barking at them, they would use English constructions directly, without being distorted under the influence of the vernacular.

It is however idle to expect the University or whatever examining bodies that be to view the question in the light we have viewed it, and so we must make the best of a bad bargain. Practice in translating into English should, therefore, start in standard sixth and continued into the seventh.

(D) Material for Translation (1) In the lower standards the words and constructions from the text will largely supply the material. (2) In the middle stage, paragraphs from the text or on similar subjects and of similar language level should be selected. (3) In the higher stage, the passages selected should, as far as possible, be from descriptive writing,—narrative, accounts of action, travel, description of nature, description of buildings or sights, biographies etc. 'Reflective' writing involving moral or philosophical disquisition should be eschewed. The main principle that should guide us in the selection of material is that nothing should be presented to the pupil that is foreign to his experience. If he has had no experience of the particular kind he would have no words

to express it. Translation means the translation of experience or ideas, and if these are foreign to him he would find himself 'word-less' to express them. He would be at a loss to know how to express them. This is especially the case when translation into the foreign tongue is attempted. Here he is still more restricted in his experience and range of vocabulary with which to express it. Translation, therefore, must be confined to passages that are well within the pupil's range—that is, that he understands in the foreign tongue. (4) Poems should never be set for translation. 'Poetry loses all its essence in translation for its effect is produced by sense, sound, rhythm and order working together and when the last three are changed, the sense is changed too.' Even paraphrasing causes irreparable damage, translation would destroy it. (5) Sentences to explain grammatical structure and idiomatic expressions in the foreign tongue. (6) Translations of passages for retranslation and comparison with the original. A passage in English is translated into the vernacular and is retranslated into English by the pupils. This retranslation into English is then compared with the original and the difference noted. Dr. Tagore, quoted by Mr. Thompson, has some interesting remarks to make on this point, "I am of opinion that, directly after the children have made a little progress in English they should be given exercise in translation and retranslation from and into English. If we give them a passage from a good English author and ask them to translate it, the inherent difference between the two languages becomes quite evident from the very beginning. Now when they translate it back into English, they naturally follow the vernacular form, and at that time, if his English is corrected by carefully comparing it with the original passage, the peculiarities of the English style will effectively be impressed on the minds of the pupils."

consists in the practice it affords in the use of the new language learnt. It is a means to an end—learning the new language. (2) It is helpful in explaining a difficult word or an abstract idea concisely either in the text or elsewhere. (3) It helps in explaining grammatical structure and idiomatic expressions in the new language. It serves as a warning against wrong expressions inherent in Indianisms. It also serves to focus attention on some positive principle underlying a grammatical usage or construction. (4) It is a test of comprehension, to find out whether the pupil has understood a word, an idiom, a sentence, or a passage. It is also a useful tool by which to test 'a particular kind or level of achievement' attained by a class. (5) Thompson comments, "Translation is a means for the examiner of measuring the pupil's power over the vocabulary. In essay the examiner has not this mean. In an essay the pupil chooses the path of least resistance and uses words or expressions which he knows very well. But in translation the examiner can limit the candidate narrowly who is closely tied in the topic and the language at his disposal." (6) In the lower and the middle stages it is sometimes found that pupils, if they attempt direct expression in the foreign tongue, make mistakes in the sequence of a story or some other narrative. In such cases there is a distinct gain in the arrangement of the matter and its sequence if the pupils first piece the story in the vernacular and then translate it into English. This practice, though found useful occasionally and in particular instances, cannot be recommended for routine adoption as the presence of the story in the vernacular will necessarily tend to the use of Indianised constructions. (7) The business or utilitarian value. After the leaving age the pupils will, in the course of their employments (in the law courts, for example), be called upon to translate English into vernacular and vice versa. The knowledge of

translation will thus stand them in good stead! (8) Translation brings out clearly the difference in the structure of the two languages. It constitutes in effect a comparative study of them. It is considered as an art in itself, pursued independently for its own sake. The pupil, however, is not concerned with this aspect of translation so long as he is in school. (9) "It is a pleasant diversion from the usual routine, an essentially artistic experience in which the pupil has the opportunity of proving that he has not only grasped the exact logical content but has received the right impression." As such it is welcome.

Translation, thus, has its value. The use of the mother tongue is barred in the teaching of English and rightly. We must avoid its use wherever possible but we have to use it wherever necessary. "It is banished from the process of assimilation and reproduction, but it can be used as a test of comprehension *after* interpretation. It is a welcome proof that direct association has been formed." Yet, the command of a language does not necessarily imply a corresponding skill at translation. Translation is not necessarily a test of knowledge of a language, at any rate with all persons. Jespersen remarks, "I should scarcely like to have my linguistic attainments judged by my skill in translation."

(F) *What a good translation should be like* (1) Translation ought not to mean a too literal translation. Languages differ enormously in point of grammar, construction and idiom. A literal translation will be ridiculous. Translation means the translation of experience in one language into that of another. It is matching thought and not matching words. It is to secure as close a parallel in the other language as possible. The exact synonym has to be found not for the word but for the thought. When the parallel thought has been ascertained, the correct form of vehicle in the other language to express it must be found.

and used. In order to secure this aim, sentences in the original passage will sometimes be required to be broken up, or on the other hand, synthesized. Pupils must be urged to attempt translation of thought and not that of words. The unit of translation should be the sentence and not the word. The too literal translation met with in legal documents, courtroom proceedings, and advertisements cannot but excite ridicule. (2) No new matter by way of comment, illustration or exposition must be added.

(G) *Classroom Procedure* (1) Present the passage to the pupils. (2) Let them read it silently. (3) Test by means of a few questions whether they have understood it. (4) Let them mark difficult words or constructions. Discuss these. (5) Let pupils attempt the translation. (6) Present a model translation (or the original passage in the case where its translation was presented for retranslation) and let pupils compare their own effort with it. In no case should the teacher take the passage sentence by sentence, translate it, (with or without the help of the pupils) and write the translation on the black board. Similarly, the model translation must never be presented at the beginning. Its place lies at the end, when the pupils have already done their effort independently. It is only by comparing the model with his own effort that a pupil can hope to derive any benefit from it. Otherwise it will merely remain a standard of unattainable excellence and its true value will not be appreciated. The presentation of a model in the beginning also kills self-effort. Without self-effort there can be no true learning. 'Learn by doing' is an important maxim applicable here as elsewhere. (7) Correction of the exercise.

The teacher must not insist that the whole work must be completed in the class-room and in the specified period. A good translation requires time and the standard of achieve-

ment differs from pupil to pupil. The class should at least have the option of executing or completing the work at home. It is a good plan to announce the passage for translation a week before it is due.

(C) Transcription

The traditional transcription exercise has either been abandoned or left too early in the school course. This is to be regretted. The humble transcription has a variety of benefits to offer and should be continued throughout.

(A) *The Value of Transcription.* (1) It affords practice in mastering the mechanism of writing. The sooner a mechanical act like writing becomes automatic the better. The adequate acquisition of a writing automaticity to which transcription undoubtedly contributes is a distinct gain. (2) It also creates in the pupil a habit of 'attentive observation of what he sees in the print'. (3) It has a business value, especially to those who will in later life become employed as clerks. There are frequent occasions on which a clerk will be required to transcribe accurately. (4) Its value as a corrective for bad spelling is recognized by all, especially if the pupil also utters what he writes. This activity is a co-ordination of four kinds of appeal, oral, visual, aural and motor. (5) If the material for transcription is selected from idioms, proverbs or usages which are likely to prove useful to the pupils, transcription becomes an aid not only to handwriting but to the teaching of English as well. (6) As a corrective for or punishment to careless pupils. (7) To teach pupils to be accurate in what they take down from the blackboard.

(B) *When should Transcription begin and cease?* Transcription begins in the first standard when pupils write down words or phrases or sentences from the blackboard.

Indeed, pupils' notebooks (in all standards) consist mostly of what had been written on the blackboard. This is of course incidental transcription. But as a conscious form of exercise it should be continued as long as there is a need for it. The determining factor should be not the standard but the individual pupil. It would be unwise to say that transcription should cease after a particular standard. The deciding test must be the pupil's ability to transcribe accurately. Some pupils acquire it earlier than others. Judging by this criterion some pupils will be leaving off transcription work in the fourth standard, for some it would be found necessary even when they reach the sixth standard. And there is no harm in setting an occasional transcription exercise even in the higher standards for all.

(C) Material for Transcription (1) This should in the beginning be the words or usages which it is desired the pupils should learn. Transcription is thus correlated to language learning. (2) Short passages or paragraphs. These should be selected from the point of view of their utility to the pupils. They should contain such usages, idioms, expressions or constructions as the pupils have learnt recently or previously. The pupils thus renew their acquaintance with them. Such passages would most probably be found in the pupils' text-books or books of allied nature. (3) Passages of great beauty and charm, those containing exalted thought or remarkable for their style of writing. These would, of course, be found suitable to higher standards only. (4) Sentences or poems for memorising. (5) Passages which contain the various marks of punctuation, e.g. quotations, or a 'direct' speech. Pupils thus, by practice, are led to understand and appreciate their use. (6) Words wrongly spelt, and the correct form of constructions wrongly used.

(D) Precautions to be observed. (1) The teacher must

make it a point of scrutinizing all transcribed work of the pupils and apportion to each pupil his share of commendation or condemnation as the case may be. A high standard of excellence must be aimed at and scrupulously adhered to. If the pupils find that their work is never inspected they are most likely to lose interest in it. Transcription under such circumstances will fail to yield the results expected from it. (2) The teacher will set a high value on accuracy or faithfulness to the original, neatness, spacing and handwriting. Any deviation from the expected standard of excellence must be visited with disapprobation and the pupil made to rewrite till he satisfies the teacher. Errors, especially in spelling, must be carefully watched and the culprit made to transcribe the correct form several times over. (3) Marks should be awarded and a record kept. These marks should be taken into consideration at the end of the school year. (4) Good specimens of transcription should be exhibited on the notice-board. This acts as a stimulus to other students as well as to the writer himself for further achievement.

(7) Dictation

It is a fact to be deplored that dictation has lately been dislodged from the proud place it once occupied in the school curriculum. Some of the schools have abandoned it totally while in others it is carried on in a half hearted, perfunctory manner. The reason for this sad state of affairs appears to be the failure to appreciate the principles underlying dictation, and its potentialities. It is a valuable tool in the hands of the English teacher and can be turned to very good account.

(A) Distribution of Dictation over the school course

In a sense dictation is a continuation of transcription and more difficult than it because whereas in the latter the pupil has the

printed page before him, in the former he has to rely on his memory of the spoken sentence. Hence to familiarize the pupil with the mental process involved in the activity he should begin with the accurate oral reproduction of the spoken sentence. The teacher speaks a sentence or two (it may be in the form of a message to be delivered to somebody) and the pupils remember it and reproduce it accurately. When pupils are trained in remembering the spoken sentence and reproducing it orally, the transition to writing it down as the 'dictator' speaks should be made. 'Oral' dictation should begin in standard third (it is futile to begin it earlier as the pupils' power of comprehension and remembering is not sufficiently developed) and prepare the way to 'written' dictation at the end of the year. Written dictation would then continue right up to the highest standard.

(B) *Material for Dictation.* In the 'good' old days the material chosen for the purpose was usually very dull. In fact the teacher picked up any book that happened to be at hand, opened it at any random page and began dictating. No wonder this sort of thing killed, if it had not already done so, all interest in the activity, and the dictation period became a series of poorly concealed yawns and drudgery. The passages for dictation should be selected for their value to the pupils, interest, and ease of remembering. The following type of material will be found suitable. (1) 'Written' dictation should be preceded by 'oral' dictation and hence pupils should be trained in remembering and reproducing verbatim short sentences, instructions, and 'messages' spoken by the teacher. (2) Poetry is more easily retained in memory than prose because the rhyme, beat and measured stops are a help to ready remembrance. Stanzas from ballads and other descriptive poetry should be chosen. (3) The selection of prose passages is a more difficult task than the selection of poetry. Prose passages should be of

change the form. Or, the teacher dictates a speech in the direct form of narration and the pupils write it down in the indirect form. These exercises, however, are more of the nature of practice in grammar and composition and as such hardly concern dictation in the strict sense of the term. Such exercises, moreover, can hardly be expected to hold interest for the pupils. Dictation, above all things must be a pleasurable activity.

(C) *Procedure to be followed in Dictation.* (1) After the passage for dictation has been selected (it should be of moderate length) the whole of it is read by the teacher while the pupils listen attentively. This previous reading of the whole passage is necessary to create a general impression of it as an organic whole. It is essential that the boy should at best "perceive the general drift of ideas." The teacher may even preface the passage by a short introduction. This is a sort of preparation for the dictation proper. (2) The teacher writes on the blackboard difficult words in the passage so that the pupils may not find them a stumbling block when they come to write them. They are not however to leave blank spaces where these words would occur in the course of writing, but write them in the way they think correct. When the dictation is over they compare 'their' spelling of these words with that written on the blackboard. Some authorities suggest that instead of the teacher writing the difficult words on the blackboard, it would be better if the boys are encouraged to refer to dictionaries for checking 'doubtful' spellings. (2) The dictation begins. The teacher utters each sentence at normal speaking speed. He should not be unnaturally slow, should not dissect words, should not stress any word or phrase more than is normally done in ordinary speech. Our aim is to create in the pupils, and test, the habit of accurately hearing, remembering and recording what is uttered at normal speech speed. Thus is the whole passage dictated.

The teacher should be particular not to repeat a sentence or a word. For one thing, repetition causes confusion among the other boys, and for another it is putting a premium on carelessness and inattention. The boys must be made to realize that they must form a habit of listening attentively the first time and that there is no such a thing as a 'second chance'. (3) When the whole passage is dictated the teacher reads it again while the class checks. (4) The notebooks are collected for correction by the teacher, or they may be interchanged between the boys for correction, each boy correcting the notebook of some other boy. Even when the correction work is done by boys the notebooks must be handed over to the teacher for final scrutiny. (4) After correction by the teacher, every boy has to write down five or ten times the correct form of each error he had committed.

(D) *The Value of Dictation* (1) It is a valuable mental training in the habits of concentration, accuracy and attention. The habit of concentration must be cultivated from childhood. The will must be disciplined to focalise attention. Dictation demands of the pupils continuous concentration. It is thus a commendable mental discipline. The careless or inattentive boy realizes that inattention will be penalized by loss of marks and that he cannot therefore afford to be careless. (2) From the purely business or utilitarian point of view dictation has gained added importance. In commercial firms, Government offices, in fact, in every work of secretarial nature, ability to take down accurately what has been dictated is a valuable asset to those who will be seeking employment in the capacity of clerks, secretaries etc. The modern dictaphone is a mechanical dictator which does not 'sing its song twice over', and the clerk or the typist must be all attention in taking down what it reproduces. Lengthy telephone messages have also to be taken

down accurately. Great commercial value is now attached to skill at dictation (3) Fomblinon regards dictation as 'a real help to appreciation' Dictation, he says, enables the teacher to widen the literary circle of the pupil who is introduced to authors not represented in his text books. Choice literary extracts should be dictated and written in a separate notebook. Such a notebook would amount to 'a written record of year's work, a possible anthology of prose and verse' (4) It is said that dictation 'presents literature as a spoken word. There is the incredible appeal to the ear' Good literature should hold more appeal when spoken than when read silently in cold print (5) It is a means of testing a pupil's ability in learning the spoken language accurately (6) Its value in the requirement of spelling is now disbelieved in. It was with this aim (improvement in spelling) that it was formerly organized. Spelling, it is now realized, is a matter for the eye and not for the ear. There are various approaches to the inculcation of correct spelling but dictation is not one of them. "Dictation does not, and cannot, and never has taught spelling. Spelling is caught rather than taught" (7) Its value to students proceeding to the university is undoubted. They will be required to take down notes of professor's lectures and a previous training in this art will stand them in good stead.

CORRECTION OF COMPOSITION

(A) *The Importance of thorough correction* After the writing of the composition exercise comes the task of correcting it, a task which if it is to be done thoroughly will entail much time and trouble on the part of the teacher. But there can be no compromise no half-way measures. It is no use teaching how to write a composition unless we see that the job is done well. If pupils' errors are not promptly corrected they tend to habituate and come to be accepted by

the culprits as accuracies. Much of the good that is expected to accrue from composition teaching will thus be negatived. The importance of thorough correction, therefore, cannot be overestimated and it must form an integral part of any composition teaching.

(B) *Principles to be observed in correction work* (1)

Self-correction The aim of correction is that the error should be eradicated. This is best secured if the pupil himself is made aware of its existence and removes it. It is only when the error is brought home to the culprit that there is any chance of its being noted down and not being repeated. The pupil must correct himself. It is of no use if the teacher corrects all the errors himself, and hands over the corrected exercise to the pupil. The error will never be impressed upon the pupil who will go on repeating it in further compositions. 'A correction which is not impressed upon the offender just wastes time, and the most impressive kind of correction is one in which the pupil finds out the correct form for himself and then enters it in his exercise book and commits it to memory.' (Thompson) (2) *Prevention is better than cure* Common errors should be isolated and discussed in the class during a special period. The teacher should have a special note book for the purpose in which he records the most common errors committed by the class. He should also have a second note book in which each pupil is assigned a page on which a record of the errors committed by him is kept. The pupil will also maintain this record at the end of his note book. This collective and individual record of pupils' mistakes is of the utmost importance and its absence will render any correction scheme abortive. (3) *Selective correction* Errors of the more heinous nature, those that are gross and more patent stand in need of urgent elimination and as such will claim precedence over those that require more time and patience for their removal.

(C) *Correction, from what points of view?* The correction of composition will be made from the following points of view,—(1) Substance, thought and arrangement (2) Expression,—lucidity, simplicity and choice of appropriate word and idiom (3) Grammatical correctness,—faulty sentence structure, errors in agreement of subject and predicate, wrong use of tenses, wrong use of prepositions, incomplete sentences, etc (4) Spelling and punctuation (5) Handwriting, spacing, and neatness

Very often the teacher concentrates on errors of grammatical nature only, such as those of spelling, tenses, etc, and completely neglects those of proper arrangement of thought, proper paragraphing and the like. Yet these are of vital importance. The 'Suggestions' is very emphatic on this point, "Too common a practice in marking exercises is to have regard mainly to such points as penmanship, spelling and perhaps punctuation, which, although important, are less important than the essentials of substance, thought and arrangement. Above all the pupil must learn to write lucidly. Unless the thought as expressed is clear to the reader the writer has failed." The teacher's first regard will be whether the pupil has presented the material methodically and arranged it logically in well defined paragraphs. The teacher's insistence on the previous submission of plans for the essays and getting them approved will materially remedy lapses into slovenly presentation.

(D) *Different Methods of Correction, right and wrong, practicable and impracticable.* The wrong methods will be considered first. (1) The time-honoured method of collecting all the exercise books periodically and returning them after carefully correcting all the errors. The teacher, from honest motives, corrects each error, writes the correct form on it, and returns the note-book to the pupil. This work

entails no light labour on the part of the teacher. Withal, all this labour is wasted. "Teachers who merely pepper their pupils exercises with entries (usually in red ink) of the correct form over the mistake are ordinarily thinking more of impressing the inspector than of teaching their pupils English". (Thompson) The pupil will never take the trouble of referring to the corrections and memorizing the correct forms. It is as well if the teacher had not corrected the errors at all, for the pupils will never look into them. The only principle found beneficial here as elsewhere is 'learn while doing'. The pupil himself must correct himself. It is only then that the existence of the error and its nature will be impressed upon him. (2) *The method of individual correction.* This is the ideal method. The teacher divides the class into seven or eight groups, each group containing not more than five pupils. When the school session is over the teacher and one of the groups stay behind and the composition exercise is corrected in the presence of the individual pupil. The teacher indicates the error to the pupil, demands of him its nature and the correct form which is then written down by the pupil himself. But perhaps the greatest advantage of this method is that the teacher is enabled to discuss the structure of the essay, the logical disposition of the material, paragraphing and the expression, a gain which no other method secures in anything like equal measure. A good composition means good thoughts, good arrangement, and good expression. All these can be discussed if the pupil is cloistered with the teacher. Unfortunately this method, though ideal, is a counsel of perfection. It consumes too much of time and the plain fact is that the teacher has not got enough of it. (3) The third and the one found eminently practicable is the method of *self-correction*. It has already been noted above that the assiduous correction of all the errors by the teacher defeats itself as the pupils do not take the trouble

of looking into their note-books again. Correction will have value only if it leads to the future prevention of committing those errors. This can be achieved only by making the pupils realize their mistakes, convincing them of the fact, so that they make a conscious effort not to commit them again. The method, in brief, consists in—(a) marking each error by a suitable symbol. This draws the attention of the pupil to it. The teacher thus indicates the error and its nature but not the correct form. The pupil then corrects the error himself and writes down the correct form. This method saves the time of the teacher and promotes self-effort. The teacher, of course, should see that all the corrections indicated by him have been made by the pupils. But this method has one disadvantage, it does not enable us to point out to the pupils faults in the structure of the essay, the arrangement and paraphrasing. A way to overcome this difficulty is to append remarks bearing on these aspects at the end of the pupils' exercise and to discuss these with the pupil after the school session.

This method (the third) is recommended for general use in schools.

Symbols and their use

A list of suitable symbols to indicate the nature of the diverse types of mistakes is given below. A few observations about the symbols and their use will not come amiss. (1) The symbols, whichever are selected, must be few and easily remembered. A complicated maze of symbols is discouraging to the pupils. (2) They should be self-explanatory. The very sight of the symbol should at once reveal the type of error it stands for. The pupil should not find it necessary to refer to the teacher for its meaning. (3) They should be uniform throughout the school and not vary from

class to class or teacher to teacher. (4) Once a recognized code of symbols is agreed upon, it should not be changed. (5) This code should be entered (better printed) on the first page of the pupils' exercise-books for ready reference. A copy may also be displayed permanently on the classroom wall.

The following signs are suggested—

S = Spelling.	T = Wrong tense, or erroneous form.
D = Delete or omit.	! = Not clear; what do you intend to say?
G = Faulty grammar.	x = Irrelevance; not applicable here.
A = Wrong article.	! = Exaggeration; tone down the statement.
P = Punctuation.	
I = Wrong idiom or bad English.	
Λ = Something has been omitted.	

The place or the word where the error has occurred is merely underlined and the appropriate symbol entered in the margin opposite the line.

The use of symbols is sometimes objected to upon the ground that they merely indicate the occurrence of the error and not the correct form, that it encourages trial and error as the pupils in making wild guesses at the correct form may substitute another error for the one already committed. This need not be so. Many of the errors are due either to carelessness or to temporary lapses. In such cases a timely hint usually suffices to recall the correct form. This fact is borne out by experience. We very often see pupils, when the error is indicated to them, looking almost ashamed of themselves and wondering (with pens or pencils in their mouths!) how silly they must have been to commit so 'obvious' (now) an error.

In the beginning every error should be underlined and

marked in the margin by a symbol. Later on, however, as the pupils progress, every error need not thus be indicated by its corresponding symbol. It may merely be underlined and left to the pupil to find out its nature.

(E) *Some Considerations for the Teacher*:—(1) The teacher should see that all errors are corrected by the pupils and the correct forms substituted. In some cases it would be found necessary to rewrite the whole exercise. (2) All words wrongly spelt should be rewritten at least ten times by the pupil, and the correct form committed to memory. (3) Correction work in the lower standards should limit itself to errors due to faulty grammar and carelessness. Expression should be left alone. Otherwise free expression and imagination in children would be discouraged which it is our aim to cultivate. (4) Do not overreach yourself; do not 'overcorrect'. "Highly critical methods will tend to repress the pupils into silence and so defeat their own end." Strike a just balance which will probably be found not an easy task. "To correct an exercise with reference to its substance, the sequence of thought, and the suitability of language requires no small amount of judgment on the part of the teacher". (5) The interval between the writing of the essay and its correction by the teacher should be reduced to the minimum. Otherwise the enthusiasm of the pupils wanes, and corrections, coming late as they do, are not attended to with the same interest and expectancy as should be the case. (6) A long-term view of correction should be taken and errors of the grosser type concentrated upon at first, leaving the others, requiring more time and patience, to systematic effort at their eradication. Such grosser types of errors are those connected with grammar. These are usually few and easily recognized and should be dealt with first. Errors connected with use of idiom or expression require longer training in their correct use. (7) If a pupil is

found committing many errors of various types it is advisable to deal with them one by one. Only one or two types should be concentrated upon at a time and got thoroughly corrected, the other types being saved up for treatment later on. "The aim in all methods is the eventual and not the immediate (except in the case of heinous errors) eradication of error."

(F) *Preventive Measures to be adopted.* Prevention must at all times be better than cure. What can be done to minimise the occasions calling for correction? The following measures are suggested. (1) Insist upon the pupils submitting their plans before they begin to write the exercise. It is easier to correct the plan and suggest rearrangement of material. Paragraphing will also be rendered more definite. This will reduce to a great extent the evil of loosely written essays. The draft may require several revisions which should be encouraged. We ourselves are never satisfied with our first draft of our own writing. Why deny the boys the same privilege? (2) Pupils' compositions should be read aloud in the class and criticism invited. When the pupil knows that his writing will be made public property, he will be most careful of how he writes. The approbation of others or his class acts as a powerful incentive for him to put forth his best with zest. (3) Pupils should be advised to read their own compositions aloud before submitting them. Oral reading very often brings out defects clearly. Thus pupils will find out their own mistakes. 'Does it sound well?' is a good test which should be applied to every kind of writing. The ear is very often a better measure than the eye. (4) In the lower standards especially, it would be found beneficial to write down the difficult words on the blackboard. (5) In the 'supervised study' method the teacher goes round the class while it is busy writing the composition and inspects such items as spacing

paragraphing, neatness, etc (6) Pupils should be encouraged to be punctilious and meticulous in the care of their exercise-books. These should be taken into consideration at the time of promotions and marks awarded. The awarding of marks or a special prize for the best kept exercise-books will make for a neater turning out of composition work and elimination of errors, at least those due to sheer carelessness. Not only does the award of marks act as a stimulus to careful work but it also enables the pupil to gauge his own progress. (7) It is a good plan to announce at the beginning of the term the list of compositions to be written during the year. Pupils will then have sufficient time to think on the topic in advance and collect material for the same. (8) Carelessly written essays should not be examined. The pupil must be made to feel that this kind of slovenly work 'just does not do'.

(G) *The Comment Lesson* A comment lesson is a necessary corollary to composition correction. The commoner types of mistakes must be brought to the notice of the pupils and thoroughly discussed so that they are not committed again. The mistakes (which the teacher has already recorded in his note-book) are classified according to types (e.g. of tenses, wrong use of articles, wrong use of prepositions, incorrect spelling, confusion between two similar sounding words, etc.) and each type is dealt with in turn. Every written composition need not be followed by a comment lesson, probably two in a month would appear just enough.

Spelling

Spelling is an art the knowledge of which is no credit but the ignorance of which is a disgrace. Failure to spell one's words correctly is considered a lack of good education and respectability, besides denoting an absence of ordinary courtesy.

to the person who is to read what is written. Old-timers deplore the lamentable spelling of the modern generation and point to their early days 'when things were different'. We all know the time-worn argument—'when we were young'. We have no means of verifying their claim but it can be stated without fear of serious contradiction that the spelling of the past was less perfect than it is frequently alleged to be. At any rate it was not more 'perfect' than it at present is. It is a controversial point and all may not agree upon any one view-point. Yet the point on which all do agree is that spelling is still a matter of importance and everything possible must be done to make pupils regard it as a valuable acquisition, and to train them in the formation of correct spelling habits.

English spelling, says Maxmüller, is a national misfortune. The lamentable irregularity of English spelling presents serious difficulties to the learner. The spelling does not correspond with the pronunciation as is the case with the phonetic writing of the vernacular. Various attempts aiming at spelling reform have been made but the practical difficulties in the way of simplification of spelling are great if not insuperable. The Americans, however, have introduced notable innovations (e.g. thru, tho, catalog, color, humor, tire (tyre), and it seems as though they are likely to stay. Craigie, however, holds a different view with regard to English spelling. "The ordinary spelling of a large number of English words is really as phonetic as it can well be, whatever charges may be brought against English orthography as a whole. The English spelling is far more regular than is usually believed" ('The Pronunciation of English').

There is, however, no doubt that English spelling is rather more irrational than we would like it to be and that a conscious effort has to be made to acquire correct spelling habits. Such habits must be formed in the earlier stages, for if once

with the reproduction of words, letter by letter, by means of hand movements. The complete spelling act must involve this recognition plus reproduction in a complete whole. The practice, met with in some schools and with some teachers, of the teacher uttering the spelling of a word and the pupils merely repeating it after him cannot be too strongly condemned. There is no visual appeal and no hand-movements,—the two most important factors that promote the strongest association—and consequently much of the labour involved is wasted.

Spelling, if left to itself, cannot take care of itself. Conscious effort must be made. How this effort should be made is indicated above. Let the pupils see the word (let it float before their eyes) and begin writing and rewriting it. That is why transcription very often gives the best results in teaching spelling. Dictation which was at one time looked upon as a great corrector of spelling errors, is not now valued for its efficiency in this direction. Dictation relies on the auditory appeal only and the most important visual appeal is lacking. So far from inculcating habits of right spelling of words it is to be feared that dictation, owing to the motor activity accompanying the writing of spoken words may habituate the pupils to the wrong spelling of words (their guesses at the spelling of the words they hear from the teacher's lip). Dictation, therefore, as an aid in forming correct spelling habits is definitely not to be recommended.

Much individual practice is necessary. Some are good spellers and some are bad. Every pupil should have a spelling note-book in which he records all words incorrectly spelt by him. His composition exercises, class note-books, and examination answerbooks will supply such a list of misspelt words. These words are written ten or more times over till they are memorised. In fact, every school and individual class should maintain and bring it up-to-date, a printed list

of words frequently misspelt and circulate it among the pupils from time to time. Every teacher of English will maintain a record for every individual pupil in his class wherein an alphabetical list of words misspelt by him is entered from time to time. He should test the pupil frequently as to whether the correct spelling of these words has been mastered or not.

Various devices for making the teaching and learning of correct spelling less of a drudgery and more of a pleasure have been invented and practised. Among these are novel spelling games such as taking any word and forming as many words as possible by the different permutations and combinations of its component alphabets. Any educational publisher will gladly supply these on request. Another device is the spelling match in which the different batches into which a class is divided (or the match may be between two classes) take part, the batch scoring the highest number of marks being declared the winner. Yet another device is for the teacher to group words with similar spelling and present them to the class, e.g. words ending in *ty, tion, non, -ous, -ere, -ive*, etc. It is claimed that a 'rational' course in the teaching of English spelling conventions can be arranged. How much good it can bring about remains to be seen for no data relating to actual experiments, conducted employing this 'rational' method, is available.

The one indisputable fact that stands out clearly is that spelling is something that must be consciously acquired, that there can be nothing 'incidental' about it, and that individual effort (through seeing and writing) is still the only royal road to its acquisition. Incidentally, the fact, that spelling can be most effectively acquired through reading (seeing the word) and writing (copying down the word), once more brings home to us the essential correlation between reading, writing, spelling and composition which any effective teaching must embody.

history from text-books written in the vernacular, there is all to be gained by their turning to parallel works in English. Stanley Lane-Poole's 'Mediaeval India' is good literature and excellent history. Since the pupils are already acquainted with the subject-matter the reading of such books will be plain sailing. (iv) The use of original historical documents, dispatches, letters, etc. in the teaching of history is valuable not only to make it more realistic and vivid but to illustrate the language, phrasing and composition. This practice can only be followed in the higher standard. (v) Poems which have historical themes as their subject are better understood if the English teacher suggests to the History teacher to expound to the pupils the incident treated in the poem (see p 10, 'Poetry Correlation with other subjects'). (vi) Lastly, history is one of the richest fields for the ingenious teacher in search of composition themes. There seems to be no earthly reason why the English teacher should not ask his pupils, after the initial difficulties of composition have been overcome, to attempt to write down their impressions about some simple scene, or incident or personality. There are intriguing possibilities in this direction. A speech, supposed to be delivered by a general before a battle, a speech by a nobleman or a commoner in the court, a public speech on some public issue, a narrative of events or a scene, a narrative related in any one Person, a dialogue, the writing of a little scene, are all suitable forms of self expression and as such make excellent themes for composition. The writing of a dialogue will be found more difficult owing to the difficulty experienced by our Indian pupils in the facile use of colloquial English. Still it is much better to encourage pupils in writing dialogues for enactment than adopting ready-made stuff which is often quite unimaginative. Seniors especially should be encouraged to utilize historical material for free composition in any form they like. Such writing has

double value, it provides practice in the writing of English, and it is at the same time a test of the pupil's ability to assimilate the teaching of history

(2) *English and Geography* (1) Geography holds the key to all the romance of exploration, adventure, and travel. It brings to us the charm of foreign lands, their people and manners. It holds, therefore, a peculiar fascination for the young mind, always in quest of the adventurous. The Geography teacher will suggest (in consultation with the English teacher) to his pupils books of travel and exploration. The annals of exploration and adventure are as fascinating as they are instructive. The exploration of Marco Polo, Mungo Park, Captain Cook, Magellan, Columbus, Hulson, Dr Livingstone, Stanley, Sven Hedin, polar explorers like Fritzjof Nansen, Captain Peary, Amundsen, Captain Scott, Earnest Shackleton, Commodore Byrd, the Hardt and the Everest Expeditions etc are all fascinating reading and can be depended upon to hold the youthful reader (and the adult too!) spell bound. Abridged accounts of these travels, adapted specially to school use, are now available and are excellently illustrated. Secondly, apart from stories of exploration, there are excellent books of travel giving account, journey fashion, of lands travelled, the people and their manners. These, too, are profusely illustrated. Educational publishers will gladly furnish on request (their catalogues with topical indices are self-explanatory) a list of such books suitable to different standards.

Illustrated magazines and weeklies are also valuable. The information they give about the various countries and happenings is the latest available. Besides, they say it with pictures. Pupils should be encouraged to browse through these. The school reading room should be liberally supplied with a representative selection of such publications.

(ii) Geography, again, is as rich in material for com-

(1) *English and History* (i) The History teacher will suggest to the English teacher to recommend to the boys certain books in English bearing on the topics he is handling in the class, and the latter will oblige him. Abridged editions of contemporary writers, adapted specially to school use, are available and should be utilised. This practice will not only make history more realistic but also provide practice in the use of English. Novels by Scott, Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Abbot's *Life of Napoleon*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Essays by Addison and Steele, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, Trollope's *Annals of Rajasthan*, illustrate the point. The English teacher, in suggesting books to be read, will however bear in mind the fundamental principle that whatever he will suggest must be the best from English literature. Poorly written stuff must be avoided. This is especially true of historical novels and historical plays. Very often the writer of a historical novel, in trying to make the fictitious appear real, falsifies history though he succeeds in simplifying it. Many historical plays are poor drama and worse history. In presenting such books to the pupils there is a real danger of their forming a distorted view of real historical events and personalities. The English teacher will, therefore, exercise the greatest caution in his selection and be judicious in his recommendation. (ii) The history teacher on the other hand should make it a point of referring to the chief writers coming within any period of history. This will once more emphasize the point that history is not merely a chronicle of kings and events but also a record of social and literary activity. Books and novels by contemporary writers reveal the social condition of the then existing society in a way an history book can. (i.e. novels by Dickens, Thackeray etc.) Such reading not only benefits the study of English but also assists history by presenting to the pupils a picture illustrating the contemporary background, (iii) Although pupils now gather much of their

(1) *English and History* (i) The History teacher will suggest to the English teacher to recommend to the boys certain books in English bearing on the topic he is handling in the class, and the latter will oblige him. Abridged editions of contemporary writers, adapted specially to school use, are available and should be utilized. This practice will not only make history more realistic but also provide practice in the use of English. Novels by Scott, Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Abbot's *Life of Napoleon*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Essays by Addison and Steele, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, Todd's *Annals of Raynham*, illustrate the point. The English teacher, in suggesting books to be read, will however bear in mind the fundamental principle that whatever he will suggest must be the best from English literature. Poorly written stuff must be avoided. This is especially true of historical novels and historical plays. Very often the writer of a historical novel, in trying to make the fictitious appear real, falsifies history though he succeeds in simplifying it. Many historical plays are poor drama and worse history. In presenting such books to the pupils there is a real danger of their forming a distorted view of real historical events and personalities. The English teacher will, therefore, exercise the greatest caution in his selection and be judicious in his recommendation. (ii) The history teacher on the other hand should make it a point of referring to the chief writers coming within any period of history. This will once more emphasize the point that history is not merely a chronicle of kings and events but also a record of social and literary activity. Books and novels by contemporary writers reveal the social condition of the then existing society in a way no history book can (i.e. novels by Dickens, Thackeray etc.) Such reading not only benefits the study of English but also assists history by presenting to the pupils a picture illustrating the contemporary background. (iii) Although pupils now gather much of their

position as History. Free composition may take any form that fancy may dictate. The object, chiefly, is to cultivate geographical imagination and provide increased practice in the use of English. Imaginary travel through foreign lands (by land, sea or air), living the life of people there, imagining oneself in the place of one of the great discoverers and describing the adventures, are all fitting themes for composition. The pupil imagines himself in the place of an Eskimo boy or an Arab boy or a boy on a Canadian ranch and describes a typical day in his life. Or, he may give a straightforward description in the third Person. The Geography teacher, in collaboration with the English teacher, will evolve a list of suitable topics for composition.

The stories of exploration, of the opening up of vast continents to trade and colonization, of excavations unearthing the romance of the buried past, of forgotten empires and vanished civilizations, are history as well as geography. Excellently written books which describe these lucidly make them literature too.

(3) *English and Science* Perhaps no other single subject than science has changed so so pleocoincidentally short a time the face of civilization. The march of science makes a tale more enchanting than any with which Scheherzade humoured the merry monarch of Baghdad. The magic carpet from the Arabian Nights is no longer magic, it is with us. The journey which took perhaps weeks and months is now accomplished in as many hours and with far more safety and comfort. The world has as if suddenly shrunk. People of Europe knew far less of Alps than they now know of Andes. The automobile, the ocean grayhound, the clipper of the air, the telephone, the telegraph, and, the latest, the wireless telegraphy, have brought the peoples of the world together, widened their horizon and enlightened their outlook. The story of electricity reads like the story of the

the Genie, the slave of the lamp. In a thousand ways this modern Genie is working for mankind, lightening its labours, ministering to its comforts. No less spectacular is the progress in other branches of science—medicine, surgery, biology, astronomy, physics, chemistry. The modern chemist is a wizard who gives us perfumes and all the colours of the rainbow from the once despised coal tar, silk from cellulose, and tooth brushes from milk. The chloroform, the rontgen rays, radium and modern surgical skill and therapeutic knowledge wage relentlessly the war against disease. We live in a faster, cleaner, healthier world today. The achievement is one of which humanity can well be proud. Young readers, if they turn to this record of human progress, will find it of absorbing interest. Lives of Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Bacon, Faraday, Franklin, Edison, Bell, Marconi, achievements of Lister, Simpson, Pasteur, Jenner, Koch, Madame Curie, all are absorbing reading. The Science teacher will cooperate with the English teacher in preparing a list of suitable books to be suggested for reading whenever the relevant topic is discussed in the class.

We have, besides, many interesting books on 'popular science' topics. The 'Wonder Book' series—The Wonder Book of Railways, Steamships, Aeroplanes, Motors, Engineering—is specially to be recommended. The subject is dealt with in the 'popular' way, in non technical language such as the man in the street will have no difficulty in following, and numerous illustrations are provided. I have seen pupils losing themselves in them. Magazines such as 'The Scientific American', and 'The Popular Science', should be subscribed for.

Apart from the practice in the use of English which the reading of such books and magazines provides, and the inherent interest the subject possesses, the knowledge which the pupil gathers of applied science is a valuable

gain Mechanical inventions are a part and parcel of our life. We can hardly switch on the electric light or travel by rail without paying a tribute to Edison and Stephenson. Science touches our life at so many points that it is desirable to know its manifold applications to practical problems. A modern citizen, must be, above all, an informed citizen.

As with history and geography, science is also rich in themes for composition. 'Marvels of Science', 'The Story of the Electric Lamp', 'The Radio speaks', 'The Progress of Aviation', 'Modern Ocean Travel', 'Edison, the wizard', are all fitting subjects for composition. The one thing about such subjects the teacher can be sure of is that they will never be dull. For material the pupils (and the English teacher too) should approach the Science teacher.

Lastly, "Laboratory notes, written exercises and tests, and oral discussions in the lecture room and laboratory constitute a large part of the machinery of science teaching, and all alike provide admirable opportunities of one kind or another for training in composition. Such training is no doubt in one sense the special province of the teacher of English, but no teacher of science can afford to neglect it, if he is to do his own work properly—for the sufficient reason that accuracy of expression is at once the test and safeguard of clear thinking." The pupil's note books or journals should always be scrupulously scrutinized not only from the point of view of accuracy and sufficiency of matter but also from that of clear-cut presentation and lucidity of expression. It is also a good plan to make boys describe orally the experiment they have carried out and the observations they have recorded. When the teacher finds the oral description sufficiently clear he writes it on the black-board and asks the boys to write down the description using their own readings and observations. Thus the main difficulty of the pupils—'how to say it'—will vanish.

As regards definitions sufficient care must be exercised to see that they are free from ambiguity. Every opportunity of practising clear expression must be availed of and the value of using a word in its exact sense emphasized.

(4) *English and Mathematics* The last subject in which one would expect to find any trace of literature is mathematics where symbols, signs and numbers replace words. There, A and B are perpetually engaged in doing a 'certain' work in a 'given time' and C is forever undoing it, we are either simplifying or multiplying an 'expression', and about the only romance we can introduce into a triangle is by producing AB to D or by dropping a perpendicular on it. Lines are either parallel or perpendicular to each other. In acute cases they are a little more inclined to be friendly. The obvious must needs be proved to be the obvious, for if not, let the obvious be the not so obvious, which is absurd.

However, though we are not concerned with the absurdities (to non-mathematicians like us) of mathematics with its signs and symbols and figures and curves, we are concerned with the correct use of whatever little English it makes use of. A perpendicular is never 'dropped' on a line or 'erected' upon it, a line is produced and not 'lengthened', the point where two lines intersect each other is the point of intersection and not a 'cross'. This is bad English. There is no justification for the wrong use of words, tenses and absolute constructions. Although the study of mathematics requires much less than do other studies the constant use of language, let us at least ensure that whatever little is required is used correctly. This correct use of language benefits both English and mathematics. An exact science like mathematics affords admirable opportunities for training in exact expression. Conversely, without careful attention to expression, complete clearness of thought is difficult to secure. "Ignorance and obscurity of thought cannot be covered by a cloud of words,

tal to do work which is not his concern only. What is wanted is not so much of formal correlation as a greater sense of cooperation which will make much incidental correlation practicable and desirable. Frequent meetings between teachers of different subjects should prove of great value in enabling them to acquaint themselves with the progress in subjects other than their own and reflect upon the possibilities of correlation and their direction.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ENGLISH TEACHER

The aim of teaching English is to enable pupils to speak, read, and write English—and do all these things well. In order that they are enabled to do so, definite, systematic instructions are necessary. The chief test for the selection of an English teacher will, therefore, be his ability to impart such instructions, his ability to realise the aims of teaching English. What special qualifications are there which fit teachers for the task of teaching English?

(A) Unsuitability of the type of English teacher commonly met with at present in most schools

At present the teaching of English is carried on in a haphazard manner. The subject is entrusted to any one who 'knows' English. The academic qualifications of English teachers are anything between Matriculation and M. A. There is no standardization, no definite minimum considered necessary. (a) The present English teacher, especially if he has passed four years at a university, has acquired a type of English which is bookish, heavy, pedantic. This type is clearly unsuitable for schools where children are learning a new language. The most need in schools is for the plain,

commonplace English of speech with as many simple and useful variations as possible. We must remember that the pupils are learning the new language by speaking it, and the University English is not only of no use in school but it actually does harm. "For the teacher of English in the school it is not convenience with Milton, Chaucer, Burke, Burns, or even Anthony Hope, or a knowledge of the history of English literature, nor even the power to write an essay on liberty or reflective subjects of the university curriculum of the university standard, that is anything like so important as a working mastery of duly commonplace English idiom, an acquaintance with English books of a kind and standard suitable for boys of school age, a good pronunciation, and some power of reading aloud. This means a course on quite different lines, taught in a different way, from the courses and procedure in vogue for university students" (Thompson). (iii) Whatever English he knows—even the unsuitable type of English he has acquired at the university—he does not know well and is frequently guilty of errors of grammar and idiom. (iv) The teaching of English is often entrusted to teachers who have had no training in the special, modern technique of foreign language teaching. (v) The teacher of English is also saddled with the teaching of other subjects with the consequence that he is unable to devote sufficient time to organizing the teaching of English. (vi) Very often the assignment of teachers to different standards is far from judicious, the obviously wrong type being placed in charge of the lower standards where the foundations of foreign language learning are being laid.

(B) Qualifications necessary for the English Teacher

(1) He must at least be a university graduate. The teaching of English should not be assigned to matriculation or other

commit in speaking and writing English. Besides, the English teacher should be a specialist in a sense, and know his subject well. He must know 'not merely how to write correct English but why this English is correct, not merely how to avoid errors but why these are errors to be avoided.' When even the university graduates are not free from errors in their speech and writing, the danger of entrusting English to non graduates will be patent. The university degree 'has not necessarily any great value in itself, but because it ought to be a guarantee that a man has seriously studied a subject, has made investigations at first hand and has acquainted himself with methods of gathering information for himself. The university degree ought to be not merely an indication of possession of information but as *some* assurance of a correct attitude towards a subject.'

(ii) He must be acquainted with English literature. He must study the English language and its literature before he presumes to feel competent to teach it. 'He need not be a specialist in the narrow sense of the term but he should have something like adequate knowledge of the best English authors, and a real interest in some branch of English studies, whether the history of literature, or the art of criticism, or the science of language.' He must not only have a knowledge of the subject but should have developed a certain sense of standard, a criterion by which to evaluate every form of writing.

(iii) Such a standard he will cultivate by reading constantly from the best literature. Thus he will come to know the good from the not so good. His reading will not be confined to the classics only but to modern literature as well. A writer need not necessarily be dead in order to be good. Without this constant reading he is likely to stagnate and be a stranger to that freshness of outlook which comes of it.

(iv) He must be trained in the principles and practice of modern foreign language teaching

(v) He must be acquainted with and employ the type of English that will be of most use to the pupil and 'the adults in their homes and business occupation.' He must be able to employ this English with 'confident and complete mastery' 'University' English will not be of much use to him

(vi) He must have received training in phonetics and must know how to use its knowledge.

(vii) To fulfil the aim of teaching English—to enable pupils to speak, read, and write English well—he must himself have the ability to speak well, to read well, and to write simply and clearly. Yet, not all teachers are able to do so. Ability to speak and read well seems simple enough. It is not. Only those who can speak and read with ease and fluency should be entrusted with the teaching of English. What is more, they should know how to assist pupils to acquire this ease and fluency. They should also know how to write correct, simple English. (This ability gains in importance when teaching the senior classes) 'Clear and audible speech, legible handwriting and the accurate statement of what is in hand and the ability to develop in pupils a habit of clear and accurate expression, are the things which I should look for in an English teacher'

(viii) Besides the qualities noted above, something else is required—'something which cannot be assured by the possession of a University degree. It is—real enthusiasm for the subject, coupled with a fine taste for what is good in literature, and linked to an ability to inspire this enthusiasm and communicate this taste to others. There is no paper qualification which can guarantee this. It can be recognized by another who is quite or nearly an equal'

(ix) As the foundations of English teaching are laid in

the lower standards, the best teacher is clearly indicated for them; and as the new language is learnt by speaking it, he must be the best speaker, the best linguist. As Thompson puts it, the lower standards will have the best speaker, the higher standards the best reader, and the middle standards 'the rest.'

(C) The Duties of the English Teacher

(i) He will carry out his work most conscientiously. Teaching with him will be a religion and he will spare no pains in the discharge of his duties. He will be a teacher by preference as by profession. (ii) He will attend to all correction work with meticulous care. He will realize the value of thorough correction. (iii) He will prepare at the beginning of the term a plan of the year's work. His will be no haphazard work. In this planned work each day's work will contribute to the week's, each week's to the month's, and each month's to the year's. (iv) He may, upon instructions from his chief, submit to him a syllabus in his subject, or adjust and revise the existing one. (v) He may, by comparing the various textbooks, make suggestions regarding the adoption of some of them for class use. (vi) He may make suggestions as to additions to the library. (vii) He will cooperate with his colleagues and explore possibilities by which his work of teaching English is brought into closer relation with the teaching of other subjects so that his subject 'derives the greatest benefit from the special virtues of each of his colleagues' (viii) He will preserve such material as he thinks useful which he will constantly meet with in magazines, newspapers and books. This will be found more useful to his purpose than some of the text-books (e. g. an article on a topic of current interest, a good short story, a charming little poem, etc.) His own reading should be from all forms of written English which would

be represented in his own private library (ix) Lastly, he will ensure, by means of the syllabus, the text-books and the authors, and the various types of lessons given and of exercises set in the various forms, that a pupil necessarily passes through an orderly and graduated course, both of reading and composition, he will secure the attainment and maintenance in each form of a due standard in each essential part of the work, oral and written."

Before closing this chapter we cannot but refer to the most important maxim of teaching and one which the teacher cannot afford to neglect, —encourage self effort in learning. We will close with the following quotation which is so important that it is given in full

"Throughout, great stress has been laid incidentally on the importance of individual effort on the part of the pupils, but this point is so fundamental and still so commonly overlooked that it may be desirable to refer to it explicitly. In all subjects, not excepting English, lessons are heard in which the teacher works hard whilst the class does little or nothing. This is bad teaching, however good the matter and manner of delivery may be.

Apart from an occasional lecture, a good lesson essentially involves questioning, indeed will consist so far as the teacher is concerned, very largely of questions, and these spread well over the class. Some will be questions to which an immediate answer can be given others will involve a pause for thought or for reference, others may set a problem to be worked out later or the lesson may break off while the class seeks a solution.

Though the form varies, the general principle holds—*a stream of talk is not teaching* and the question a teacher must put to himself after the lesson is not "How much information have I given out?" but "How much work have

my individual pupils done?" His problem is not to do the work for them—that is impossible,—but to stimulate and guide their own activity." (*'Suggestions'*). •

Mr Tomkinson has identical observation to make but puts it rather epigrammatically "The mistaken zeal of the earnest teacher is another stumbling block. Experienced teachers know that they habitually occupy the stage too long. They impose an almost monastic silence upon the class and pay for it by having to do all the talking themselves. They are overmuch like the pushing gentleman who whenever he went to a funeral wanted to be the corpse, and whenever he went to a wedding wanted to be the bride."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

It is suggested that the library of every reputable Teachers' College or Teachers' Training Institute should contain the following books.

For the sake of convenience the list is arranged section-wise

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APPENDIX I

Questions set at the B. T. Degree Examination of the University of Bombay, 1925-1941.

1941

1. As a fortunate Headmaster, allowed a free hand in the choice and employment of your assistants, show in some detail how you would choose your English teachers, and what special aptitudes and qualifications you would require of them and why?

2. In view of the important place now assigned to recent and contemporary poetry in good English anthologies and selections for schools, criticise the suggestion that the University of Bombay should exclude from Matriculation and junior colloquio classes any books of prose or verse containing selections from twentieth century literature.

3. The Public expects that the teacher will teach his class to spell. What steps would you take at various stages of the school course to see that your pupils satisfy this demand?

4. What importance would you give to the library in the English work of the school? How would you organize it, as well as regulate and enforce its use, so that the pupils acquire the reading habit and are trained in the proper use of the books?

5. Discuss fully and freely the introduction and teaching of 'Basic English' in schools in India.

1940

1. "The primary appeal of the literature lesson is not to the child's reason, but to his imagination and emotion."

Examine the statement and illustrate it by referring to a lesson in English that you have given in the course of your teaching

2 Determine the place of Phonetics in the teaching of English in our secondary schools How would you ensure accuracy in pronunciation?

3 Teachers spend a good deal of time on correction of composition exercises but without satisfactory results What methods would you adopt with a view to securing better results?

4 To what purposes can Dramatization be applied in the teaching of English?

5 Discuss the utility of Silent Reading in the classroom

1939

1 "Less learning, more practice" What value do you see in this maxim as a way of improving the English of your pupils?

2 "Appreciation is caught, not taught" Discuss and illustrate

3 Explain what is meant by "functional grammar" On what grounds is its use in schools advocated?

4 You are given a class in which bad spelling is common By what means would you remedy the defect? Give reasons for your method

5 What gains do we expect to secure from the use of Rapid or Supplementary readers? What, in your opinion, are the marks of good Rapid readers?

1938

1 In what ways can a teacher help children to enjoy literature? What are the commonest faults in literature lessons?

2 "To ensure effective expression in composition the pupils should have something to say and not be made to say something" Discuss

3 To what extent does a knowledge of grammar help in the acquisition and mastery of a language?

4 "There is current in many schools an English which is Indianized in pronunciation and intonation, and which, therefore, fails accurately to convey the genius of the language"

Mention instances of such Indianisms and show how you would deal with them

5 What is the place of Silent Reading in the teaching of English? What steps would you take to make your pupils skilled silent readers?

1937

1 "The position of English in India is not analogous to that of a modern foreign language in other countries" Explain this statement. How far is this peculiar position of English reflected in the aims and the course of English teaching in Indian Secondary schools?

2 What are the objects of making children in A V standards I-III read aloud in class? How may these be best achieved?

3 "Literary appreciation is best fostered by means of poetry" Discuss, quoting or referring to suitable poems in your answer

4 What is the value of supplementary Reading at different stages of the school course? Discuss various methods of dealing with the supplementary Reader

(a) What general principles would guide you in choosing subjects for composition?

(b) How would you deal with pupil's mistakes in written composition?

1. Give the arguments for and against the use of the Direct Method in teaching English, and show, from your own experience, how far each of these is valid.

2. Describe four definite common faults in pronunciation. To what causes do you attribute them and show exactly how you would correct each.

3. "Not only did we learn English parsing thoroughly, but we also practiced continually English analysis As I remained in this form (Third Fourth B) three times as long as any one else, I had three times as much of it. I learnt it thoroughly. Thus I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary English sentence—which is a noble thing."—*Winston Churchill*. Discuss the value of such training in schools.

4. How far would you rely on the aid of the class-library in the teaching of English? Discuss its use and composition, stating the class you have in mind.

5. What do you consider to be the purpose of oral composition? How would you teach it at various stages of the school course?

1. Septuagenarian and octogenarian Elphinstonians say, 'There was no 'Direct Method' when we learnt English; yet we speak and write better English than the matriculates of today.'

How would you defend the 'Direct Method' against criticism of this type?

2. Some consider the learning of formal English grammar as a preparation for learning another language, others maintain that it makes boys think and teaches them to

write good English, while still others consider it a waste of time. Which of these views do you accept, and why?

3. "I used to read and learn some written speech, and then compose one on the same subject but in different words. But I came to see that the best words had been appropriated by the writer. If, therefore, I used the same words I gained nothing, if others, I got into the habit of using inadequate language."—*Cicero*.

Discuss these remarks with reference to paraphrasing.

4. Discuss the value in teaching English of three of the following exercises:—(a) Prose, (b) Dictation, (c) Parsing and analysis, (d) Reproduction of stories read by the teacher, (e) Translation from the mother-tongue.

5. Describe ways in which you would help your pupils to acquire good English handwriting.

1934

1. Estimate the importance of a thorough knowledge of phonetics for the equipment of an 'English' teacher. How may this knowledge best be acquired? To what extent should the pupils be trained (a) in the reading, and (b) in the writing of the phonetic script?

2. What considerations should determine the selection of reading material intended to serve as a foundation for instruction in English? Give reasons for or against the inclusion at this stage of (a) verse, and (b) texts written for English children of a substantially lower age than your pupils.

3. Mention, and quote if possible, any poem which you yourself enjoy and on which you would enjoy giving a lesson. Indicate the points which you would treat and how you would treat them.

4. A teacher has forty free compositions of standard VI

before him for correction. What method can be employed that will deal effectively with individual mistakes and manners of treatment without wasting the time of the class as a whole?

5 How would you enable your pupils (1) to have a sense of style in what they read, and (2) to acquire a style of their own? Consider the question for pupils in the last three years of school.

1931

1 "The major part of the school time-table and day in A. V. schools is and should be available for the teaching of English."

Discuss and illustrate this statement.

2 What principles would guide you in choosing English readers for an A. V. school?

Discuss the merits of those you have met in use in schools. What sets of readers would you recommend? Estimate the value of your choice.

3 Discuss the respective values of the following as means of teaching English spelling —(1) Transcription, (2) Oral Repetition (words written on the B B), (3) Dictation

OR

What particular difficulties in pronunciation do you expect to meet with in the school in which you will teach? How would you deal with them?

4 With what objects in view would you plan the English grammar syllabus of a school in India? How would you make use of the childrens knowledge of the grammar of their own vernaculars?

Set out in some detail your first year's work

5. "The first requirement in composition is that it should be sincere or at least not insincere".

How would this consideration influence you in your choice of themes and in your criticism of the compositions you receive? Give examples.

6. Discuss (naming the class you have in mind) the formation, uses, and running of a class library as an aid to English teaching.

1932

1. What are your criteria for judging reading? State what steps you would take to ensure a satisfactory standard of English reading.

2. If you were free to choose text-books for your school, how would you choose English text-books? State what books you would use in each class of a secondary school.

3. Apart from the question of errors found in general in the pronunciation of English, discuss definite types of mis-pronunciation you have noticed in any particular individual and describe exactly what steps you would take to correct them.

4. What are the essential features of the Direct Method of teaching modern languages?

What compromise between the Direct Method and older methods do you suggest?

5. Criticise the methods of teaching English composition at present followed in the majority of Indian High Schools. Suggest improvements.

6. Write short notes—not an elaborate plan—of a lesson on Mr. Drinkwater's poem 'Moonlit Apples'. State the nature of the class to whom you would give this lesson.

(N. B.:—The poem 'Moonlit Apples' is not reproduced here.)

1930

1. State briefly the procedure you would adopt in teaching and correcting English Composition in higher standards

2 Write how you would teach the following poem, 'Cradle Song' by Mrs Sarojini Naidu

(N B —The poem 'Cradle Song' is not reproduced here)

3 State the principles underlying the Direct Method of teaching English

How far would you admit the use of the vernacular in teaching it by this method?

4. Plan a first year's course in English

5 Examine the place of any three of the following in the teaching of English —(1) Phonetics, (2) Rapid reading, (3) Precis-writing (4) Grammar, (5) Dramatisation

1929

1 Describe in broad outline the course in English followed in the First Standard this year. What do you consider to be its most interesting features?

2 Explain the following, using any recognised phonetic script, —(a) Voiced and breathed sounds, (b) Assimilation, (c) Intonation

3 Discuss the place of "Silent Reading" in the teaching of English

4 What is meant by 'The grammar of function'? Explain how you would give a class the idea of a sentence

5 Discuss briefly the value of the following in the teaching of English —(a) Story telling, (2) Debates and lectures, (3) Picture Composition

6 Indicate in general how you would proceed to teach the following poem, 'Sea Fever', by John Masefield

(N B —The poem 'Sea Fever', is not reproduced here)

1924

1. Write short notes on the teaching of any two of the following—(a) Spelling, (b) Correct pronunciation, (c) Reading in the lower standards.

2. Indicate briefly how you would deal with any two of the following—(a) Pencil-writing, (b) Direct and Indirect Speech, (c) Vocabulary work.

3. Outline steps that you would follow in a year's work in English composition to A V standard I or VI.

4. What measures would you adopt to prevent your pupils from carrying vernacular habits and pronunciation into English speech?

5. (a) What general principles do you follow in giving a lesson on the 'appreciation of English poetry'?

(b) Write notes of an appreciation lesson on the following poem. (A B The poem is not reproduced here.)

6. Outline a lesson to the first standard class in an A V school on the following—

"One day a crow was very thirsty. She saw a jug on the ground. She flew to it. She saw water at the bottom of the jug. There was not much water. She could not reach it. She dropped some stones into the jug. The water rose higher and higher. Soon it was near to the top of the jug. Then she drank some water. So was a clever crow."

1927

1. What is the importance of the early stage in teaching English? What general principles would you follow in teaching English to beginners?

2. Write short notes on the place and value of any three of the following—(1) Silent Reading, (2) Phonetics, (3) Dictation, (4) Analysis.

3 Give an outline of a preliminary lesson on any *one* of the following —(1) Direct and Indirect speech, (2) Function of adverbs

4 Write short notes of an appreciation lesson on the following poem —(N.B. —The poem by Wordsworth is not reproduced here.)

5 Discuss various methods of teaching composition and their relative importance in the teaching of A V Standards I, IV and VI

6 Indicate briefly the method of procedure that you would adopt in dealing with the following —

- (i) A prose passage containing simple ideas but a number of difficult words, the meaning of which is essential to an understanding of the passage
- (ii) A prose passage containing fairly difficult ideas expressed mostly in simple words
- (iii) A story full of action, simple in language but containing several strange English colloquialisms

Explain why you would adopt such procedure

1926

1 Discuss and determine the place of grammar and translation in the teaching of English to Indian boys

2 What are the fundamental principles of the Direct Method of teaching a foreign language? What practical difficulties stand in the way of its effective introduction in Indian schools?

3 Write a brief note on the teaching of English Composition in our secondary schools, suggesting measures for its improvement

4 Express your opinion on the different styles of English handwriting taught in schools giving reasons

5. What procedure would you adopt in correcting English reading in the classroom?

6. Write short notes of a lesson on the following poem, 'To a Butterfly', from the point of view of aesthetic appreciation :—

(N. B. :—The poem 'To a Butterfly' is not reproduced here.)

1925

1. "It is sad to think that very few of the students who pass out of our schools ever appreciate the aesthetic and moral beauty in English literature."

Discuss the validity of this statement and state clearly how you would proceed, in your class work or otherwise, to encourage such appreciation.

2. Write notes on a single lesson, or a series of lessons, on any one of the following subjects :—

(a) Adverbial phrases, (b) Analysis of complex sentences, (c) The Infinitive of purpose

3. Give a brief outline of the method you would adopt in teaching English to a class of First Standard boys.

What means would you adopt to make the work interesting and how would you ensure correct pronunciation?

4. Discuss the value of the following in the teaching of English :—(a) Free composition, (b) Sub-conscious comprehension, (c) Picture lessons, (d) Phonetics.

5. Describe the procedure you would follow in teaching a short narrative poem to a III standard class.

Illustrate with reference to a lesson you have taken yourself or seen.

6. When detailed and non-detailed texts are set, what differences do you make in your method of dealing with them?

APPENDIX II

Questions set at the S. T. C. Examination, 1925-1941,
held by The Department of Public Instruction, Bombay.

1941

1. Give an outline (not detailed notes) of a lesson, or a series of lessons, on:—

(f) An appreciation lesson on the following poem:—

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be,
Or standing long an oak, three hundred years,
To fall a log at last, dry bald and seer.

A lily of a day

Is fairer far in May,

Although it fall and die that night—

It was the plant and flower of light.

In small proportions we just beauties see;

And in short measures life may perfect be

(State the standard and the average age of the pupils for whom the lesson is meant.)

2. Discuss the place of the following in the teaching of English:—(a) Oral Composition, (b) Formal Grammar, (c) Supplementary Reading.

1940

1. Give a short outline (not detailed notes) of a lesson, or lessons, on any one of the following:—

(a) A Railway station (English Oral Composition).

State the standard and the average age of the pupils for whom the lesson is meant.

2. Discuss the place of the following in the teaching

of English:—(a) Dictation, (b) Silent Reading, (c) Recitation in Poetry.

1939

1. How would you treat any *one* of the following topics:—(a) Analysis of simple sentences (English).

2. Write short notes on—(a) Oral work in standard I, (b) The place of translation in the teaching of English at the High School Stage.

1938

1. Give a short outline (not detailed notes) of a lesson, or lessons, on any *one* of the following topics:—

(a) Adverbs (English Grammar).

State the standard and the average age of the pupils for whom the lesson is meant.

2. What type of work in English Composition do you consider most suitable for the lower classes of A. V. schools? State your reasons.

1937

1. Give an outline (not detailed notes) of a lesson, or a series of lessons, on any *one* of the following:—

(d) Elections (Oral Composition).

2. What are the objects of Rapid reading? How would you conduct a Rapid Reading lesson?

1936

1. Draw notes of a lesson on any *one* of the following:—
(a) Adjectives.

2. Discuss the principle underlying the Direct Method

of teaching English. In employing this method, how would you permit the use of the vernacular?

1935

1. Suggest the types of exercises you would use to improve your pupil's spelling, and estimate their relative value.

1934

1. Draw notes of a lesson on any one of the following:—
(a) Analysis of simple sentences (English).

2. What principles would you bear in mind in teaching English at the High School stage? In your answer refer to suitable poems.

1933

1. What different methods of teaching English are being followed in the Presidency? Briefly discuss their relative merits.

1932

1. Discuss the principles underlying the Direct Method of teaching English.

2. Write short notes on (a) Silent Reading, (b) Dramatization.

1931

1. Write notes of a lesson, or a series of lessons, on any one of the following subjects:—

(a) An appreciation lesson on the following poem:—
(N. B.:—The poem, Walter De La Mare's 'Silver', is not reproduced here.)

State the class and the approximate average age of the pupils to whom you intend to give the chosen lesson.

2. What methods can you suggest for improving the teaching of English composition in our schools?

3. Write notes on (a) Form-room plays.

1930

1. Give an outline plan of a lesson, or a series of lessons, on any one of the following topics:—

(g) An appreciation lesson on the following poem:—

(N. B.:—The poem, 'How Sleep the Brave' by William Collins, is not reproduced here).

The average age of the pupils to whom the lesson is to be taught should be given.

2. Briefly examine the relative merits of the current methods of teaching English to Indian children

1929

1. Write notes of a lesson, or a series of lessons, on any one of the following subjects:—

(o) An appreciation lesson on the following poem,

(N. B.:—The poem, 'By the Sea' by Wordsworth, is not reproduced here)

The average age of the children to whom the lesson is taught should be stated. The notes should give only the outline of the method to be adopted.

2. Briefly discuss the principles underlying the teaching of a foreign language by the Direct Method. What are the difficulties of application in the Bombay Presidency?

1928

1. Write notes of a lesson, or a series of lessons, on any one of the following subjects:—

(a) An appreciation lesson on the following poem —

(N B —The poem, 'The Cloud' by Shelley, is not reproduced here)

2 Discuss the place of the following in the teaching of English —(a) Reading aloud, (b) Silent Reading, (c) Formal Grammar

1927

1 Write short notes on any *three* of the following topics —

(a) Silent reading in the teaching of English

(b) The place of precis writing in the teaching of English

2 Write notes of a lesson on any one of the following subjects (a) An 'Appreciation' lesson on the following poem —

(N B —The poem beginning with 'I pass the ships that pass by day', and ending with 'God's blessings be on every light' is not reproduced here)

The class to which the lesson is to be given should be stated, and the approximate average age

3 It is sometimes said that the Direct Method of teaching English produces careless composition. How would you endeavour to obviate this criticism?

Note —You may treat this as a general question or illustrate your method with reference to a particular class

4 Comment on the validity or otherwise of any *three* of the following criticisms of lessons —

(a) "Silent reading should come after the passage is thoroughly understood, not at the beginning of the lesson"

1926

1. Write short notes on any *two* of the following subjects:—

(a) The use of phonetics in the teaching of English to Indian children.

(b) The correlation of written composition in English.

2. Discuss the principles on which the 'Direct Method' of teaching a foreign language is based.

3. You have three lesson periods in which to treat a poem in a VI A. V. class. What place would you give to the following and at what stage would you deal with them?

(a) The meaning of words, (b) The beauty of words and phrases, (c) The thought in the poem, (d) Grammatical difficulties, and (e) Metro and rhyme.

1925

1. Discuss how you would proceed to teach English to a class of children just beginning to learn that language.

2. What procedure would you adopt to stimulate literary appreciation in the two highest standards of an Indian school?

APPENDIX III

Questions set at the T D Examination of the University of Bombay, 1940-1941

1941

1 Oral work must form an integral part of the course through all stages of school education. How would you accomplish this aim in the teaching of English?

2 How would you utilize the radio, the linguaphone, pictures, and the school magazines as aids in the teaching of English?

3 Select a poem suitable for the middle school stage and sketch your plan for an appreciation lesson.

4 Write brief notes on any *three* of the following — (a) Spelling Drill, (b) Use of dictionary, (c) Silent Reading, (d) Basic English.

1940

1 What adaptation do you consider necessary in the Direct Method of teaching English in standard I?

2 What principles would you bear in mind in the choice of poems and text-books that you have found suitable for the purpose?

3 How would you plan composition course for standard III?

4 On what principles would you select the rapid reader and the text book in English prose? What difference would you make in the actual teaching of the rapid reader and the prescribed text book?

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